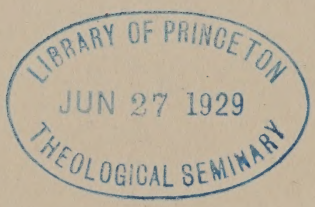

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The rediscovery of Jesus

THE REDISCOVERY OF JESUS

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THE REDISCOVERY OF JESUS

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TO

FIVE YOUNG LIVES
WHO WILL
SOME DAY
BE GRATEFUL
FOR THE GALILEAN'S MESSAGE

PREFACE

THE educated world of our day is keenly interested in the great leaders who have done so much to shape modern thought. Directly or indirectly, people reared in America or Europe are bound to feel the influence of Jesus of Galilee. The heavy mists of tradition are slowly rising from the form of the Carpenter-Prophet, leaving in bold relief against the familiar Palestinian background a most entrancing life. The sheer honesty of the man, his magnetic power over masses of people, his tireless interest in every human need, and his sunny faith in human goodness and human destiny mark him, beyond question, as one of the greatest factors in world-progress. To make him better known; to restore some of the original warmth and passionate earnestness of this great character; and to let him speak to our times with the same eloquent directness that captured both imagination and heart in the days of old, is the plain purpose of this little book.

F. M.

Chicago, Illinois,
Feb. 18, 1929.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	vii
I.	THE REDISCOVERY OF JESUS	3
II.	JESUS AMONG THE PROPHETS	21
III.	A RARE FRIENDSHIP—AND ITS RESULTS	41
IV.	PROPHET OF IRRESISTIBLE POWER	62
V.	PROPHET OF HUMANITY	82
VI.	PROPHET OF CONTAGIOUS JOY	101
VII.	PROPHET OF ABSOLUTE SINCERITY	123
VIII.	FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS	148
IX.	HOURS OF BITTER LONELINESS	170
X.	VICTORY IN DEFEAT	189

APPENDIX

THE PORTRAIT IN THE EARLIEST GOSPEL SOURCES 209

OUTLINE OF SYNOPTIC PASSAGES, *Reflecting—*

I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JESUS' LIFE 214

II. JESUS' OWN RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS . 223

III. EDITORIAL APPRECIATIONS AND CORRECTIONS OF LATER YEARS . . 252

DRAMATIC SCENES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

THE REDISCOVERY OF JESUS

Jesus of Nazareth has been one of the most misunderstood men of history. The very differences of judgment on the part of the many who have attempted to understand and evaluate this exceptional personality are, in a very true sense, one of the highest tributes which could possibly be laid at the feet of any human being. True greatness always defies analysis. It cannot possibly follow the paths of tradition and uniformity; otherwise it would not be worthy of being called great. Its genius is found in its ability to strike out new and permanent paths for the race.

Such a character as that of Jesus, therefore, never should be thought of as static or final. Rather is it in startling, paradoxical, ever-changing flux. Not alone in the great crises of life, but in the common affairs of every day as well. In fact, there are kaleidoscopic changes in the daily life of Jesus little short of miraculous. It must ever be so with one who thinks independently,

who understands and suffers with others, who learns to love truth and fellowmen passionately. To understand the Nazarene, therefore, one must necessarily regard him as humanly subject to all the heightened circumstances and moods of life which an awakening Poet and Lover might be expected to experience in a suppressed and forlorn little province like Palestine.

After all these generations of bibliolatry and commentary, labored and vivisectional as they have been, what can we say that we really *know* about Jesus' personality and career? We have no revealing autobiography from his versatile mind —even as much as we have in the case of Paul of Tarsus. Nor did he ever enjoy the freedom or the leisure to train, with any thoroughness, a steady group of disciples in the moral and religious convictions which were so rapidly taking form deep within his own mind. The few men and women who followed him hither and yon over the highways of Palestine gathered from his public and private talks only the most meagre and disconnected impressions of his real thought. Even his closest companions really did not know him well. His experience and modes of thought were too far beyond their comprehension. A

superior prophet was coming to birth out of the dry and forbidding soil of their conventional life. Until he interpreted their own hearts and longings to them, and until time and a tragic passing indelibly impressed upon their unimaginative minds the rare quality of his devotion and his heroism, how *could* they be expected to appreciate this child of their age-long passion?

To make the whole subject still more baffling, and all but hopelessly confusing, we find that we have as the sole written remains of that early time documents which, while they undoubtedly represent earnest and painstaking attempts to record the most salient teachings and deeds of Jesus, are after all chiefly the cherished reminiscences of a long-idealized past, as seen by the various editors of the gospel accounts.[1] Or, at best, they are the reiterated sentences of gold and the unforgettable acts of grace which were stamped ineffaceably upon the memories of his most intimate friends.

The modern world must never again expect to catch this great life in static pose. Yet, while we must frankly acknowledge the tenuous and impressionistic nature of our sources for a real life of

[1] Consult the gospel documents at the end of the book.

Jesus, we have at least this consolation in our endeavor to trace back the tremendous tides of world-activity and idealism which owe their being to his deep grasp of truth and to his devotion to "the highest will of God," that his early friends rose to their task of interpretation with a spirit of terrible earnestness and warmth of love for him and for their contemporaries. Even allowing for all of the elements of change that must ever creep into such attempts, their writings reveal the fact of his burning reality in their lives and the transforming influence of his ideals in their daily conduct. Hence we recognize in these realistic pictures a heritage of vital worth, destined to make an even deeper impression upon the generations to come than has ever before been true.

In a day like our own, which attempts to base all of its knowledge upon factual history, is there not grave danger that we underestimate the less historical but still very valuable documents of early times whose pictures were confessedly drawn in the heavy colors of oriental imagery, of miracle and tradition, of simple adoration and warm adolescent devotion? For, when all is said, the warm human emotions have a right to be heard in court as well as the more mature and

scientific evidence of the historically trained witnesses of our more advanced day.

All too long have passing generations looked upon the Christian gospels as the work of careful historians whose every word could be depended upon literally. It was easy to overlook the fact that the constituent gospel documents were not subjected to historical tests, and that the so-called eye-witness testimony was too often the effusion of untrained imaginations or the naïve borrowing of traditional folk-stories.

When embarrassing questions and challenging statements were voiced in circles hostile to the Christian assumptions of finality, the fathers of the faith found it easy to dispose of the opposition by resorting to innuendo, and then justifying themselves by making even more strenuous claims for the dogmatic finality of their convictions. The prophetic forecasting of events, dependence upon especially revealed "scripture," the attestation of miraculous intervention from heaven, or even the unblinking assertion of traditional views, seemed to these defenders of the word to be fully justified in view of their ultimate purpose of making known "the truth of God."

But it requires something more than naïve

credulity, indignant denunciation, and stormy assertions to establish the faith of men in divine goodness and human perfectibility. Even those within the Christian brotherhood could not always remain satisfied with such unsound measures of building up the faith; and the hand of the opposition received added strength, especially when the non-Christian inquisitors so often were represented by Greek, Roman, and Jew of culture and of high analytical ability. Not infrequently, these critics had a much broader vision of human history and need than had their Christian opponents.

If only the church fathers could have remained satisfied with the directness and simplicity of Jesus, and could have kept the plain principles which he taught reasonably free from the theological quibbles and metaphysical elaborations of later times! For, in the light of the golden character of the earlier writings, the petty accretions of later and more anxious times seem as so much dross. Scholars have rightly urged the prime necessity of working back toward the original documents, and of restoring the native environment of that day, in the hope that the vision of the real character of Jesus might again help the

lagging forces of society to attain to those higher ethical levels where alone peace of soul and social progress are to be obtained.

After nineteen centuries of commanding influence in the lives of untold millions of Christian and Jewish people, not to mention many other groups in both Orient and Occident, the personality of Jesus is still an enigma to most people. The one man to whom modern times are most indebted for a clarification of the basal principles of religion is still a stranger in that world of undiscovered brotherhood for which he spent the very last ounce of his devoted strength. And he spent it—this is the pathetic side of it all—in faith that in no distant future all this sacrifice would somehow bear fruitage for the welfare of the whole world. Yet this gracious character, so sorely needed as an inspirational and steadying factor in the life of our modern youth, is almost hopelessly hidden by the confusing mists of tradition —like some great mountain peak, which the wanderer in unfamiliar heights desperately needs to point the way home, but which is concealed by lingering clouds as if to mock at the hopes of the lost pilgrim and wish him some untimely fate.

Rich as is the history of both East and West in

leaders who have attained great heights in the fields of statesmanship, scholarship, art, science and invention, there is sadly enough a great dearth of commanding characters in the realm of ethics and religion. Furthermore, when one sees how acquaintance with the historical character of the simple and kindly Jesus grips the imagination of certain limited groups of the modern youth of all countries, and what new breadth and power his example lends to the perplexed situation, how can one help wondering at the lethargy and blindness of the religious forces which seem chiefly responsible for this sad condition to-day?

The patient and constructive scholarship of the past century and a half has brought to light such startling and inspiring discoveries about the life and character of Jesus that one wonders all the more that these results should be so persistently withheld from our young people. First of all, it is evident that we are dealing here with one whose training and outlook upon life are necessarily those of the Near East. It was an area which, for centuries, had been under the domination of stronger foreign powers. Jesus was a member of a subject race which persisted in feeding its forlorn hopes upon dreams of future domination of

the world. Meanwhile their resources were openly exploited by their masters, and their clannish traditionalism made it all but impossible for them to satisfy the demands of their overlords. It grew more and more evident that they never could find full and free expression for their intense ambitions until either they merged their powers completely with some of the more mighty and friendly nations, or otherwise won the right to set up, in some favored corner of earth, a commonwealth of their own through which the urgent soul within them should find complete racial and religious outlet.

Jesus can never be understood except as a Jew among Jews. The pathetic and very unfair attempts to Christianize, to westernize, or even to universalize him, in order to induce people of all nationalities to forget his humble origin, are unworthy of a day which prides itself upon playing true to the facts. Either let us give up our pretense to scientific and historical accuracy, or let us accept Jesus in his own native environment and honor him for what he became. Let us also honor his people for furnishing such a commanding figure to represent their ideals before the world.

If Christian and Jewish historians could forego their unfortunate traditionalism and prejudice, combining their best judgments in presenting the historic Jesus to the world, great would be the gain. Few and blessed are the pioneers in this field. Because their findings are likely to shatter the cherished traditions of both Jewish and Christian literalists, they must find their consolation in having followed the truth as they see it, and in hastening a day of better understanding both of peoples and of documents.

On the other hand, educated moderns have grown used to the broader sweep of history. They begin to catch glimpses of cosmic relationships. They think in terms of light-years and eternal ages. They conceive it to be the great human task to remain at the world's work until life is made wonderfully fair and inspiring for all peoples of every land on the globe. They can no longer imagine tiny heavens above a static Lilliputian earth. How then can they think of the autocratic ruler of that microscopic upper realm as intervening to accomplish ends which are so clearly the inherited obligations of the whole race of Earth's men and women who from generation to generation make this little planet their home?

Long since have the better educated of all nations come to think in international terms rather than in those of a single group. And long since have the broader Græco-Roman and Western ideals so dominated the thinking of this educated world that the restricted vision and hopes of the provincial Palestine of past years seem very foreign indeed to their present ways of thinking.

One reason why it is so difficult to get at the obviously simple life and thought of Jesus is that the oral accounts of what he said and did were themselves current in many variant forms. Then these were taken up in numerous Aramaic and Greek written records. It is evident that, when these earliest records were combined and adapted to meet the needs of Christian communities in Asia and Europe over a period of more than a whole century, the original lines of the story would bit by bit be obliterated and the imaginary hero and folk-pictures of the times be substituted. So we need not be at all surprised to find a distinct overlay of western miracle and superstition covering, with more or less evident purpose, the straightforward narrative of Jesus' own generation.

Probably these first documents written by Jesus'

Aramaic-speaking friends were simple compilations of his more pointed sayings issued to aid in training the growing groups of disciples in his principal ideals and way of living. Adapted chiefly for people who still thought in terms of Jewish environment and need, they were necessarily simple and doubtless reflected with considerable reliability the main lines of their Teacher's convictions. Perhaps the years 50 to 60 A.D. are the earliest dates at which these native-tongue documents could have been composed. They reflect the primitive experiences of the early Christian community before the problems incident to expansion, persecutions, and rivalry with other and older faiths had arisen.

The Greek translations of these brief and very occasional Aramaic works, upon which we are mainly dependent for our knowledge of these teachings, were probably given form in the critical years just preceding and following the destruction of the city of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman armies, 70 A.D. Of course, the necessities of translation into a foreign tongue, and the very different background and needs of the Greek-speaking Christians, as well as the changed times and types of disciples, would all make it

difficult to keep Jesus' original views absolutely intact. When several different translations of the same words and incidents are found in the gospels it becomes somewhat easier to work back to the simpler Palestinian teachings which Jesus quite certainly presented to his Jewish followers of the years 29-30 A.D., the years to which his public work may with reason be confined.

A still greater hindrance to our understanding of Jesus arises from the fact that these simple Greek versions of Jesus' deeds and sayings were, from time to time during the years 70-150 A.D., expanded to yield more definite and detailed teaching material for the rapidly growing Christian communities springing up around the Mediterranean and Black seas, and even from the Euphrates river on the East to Rome and the Spanish borders on the far West.

These enlarged and carefully edited books were called "gospels," signifying the fact that they contained the happy messages of Jesus for mankind. They argued that these messages and the accompanying explanations were fully worthy of acceptance at the hands of all sincere people. They called, indeed, for quick response to this royal summons to discipleship. These books were

specifically designed for the teaching purposes of the church: to train the young in the best ways of living, and to persuade interested non-Christians to throw in their lot with the socially discredited but growing sect called "Christian."

In books thus composed of many documents and representing the editorial hands of many church leaders, one would not expect to find conformity of views. They varied greatly, reflecting the community life and thought of groups as far apart both geographically and doctrinally as the Christian circles of Alexandria, Antioch of Syria, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Constantinople, and Rome. Those of a practical or ritualistic turn of mind were represented side by side with those of more mystic and philosophical tendencies.

These were trying days when very stern and dogmatic teaching had to be inculcated in order to keep immature or wavering Christians in the fold lest they fall back into the allurements of the older and less exacting faiths. For we must remember that scores of these faiths were also appealing for a following; and that many of them had been in the field for centuries past with convincing scriptures, mighty Saviors, and final doctrines of salvation, heaven, hell, and immortality.

Surely no effort could be spared by the determined Christian forces so to adapt Jesus' vital thought to the problems of the time as to make his major demands for pure living highly effective in these sacred lives.

It would have been strange indeed if the Christian writers had not woven around Jesus' plain and unpretentious life many mythical fancies with which they had been acquainted in other faiths of the time, or if they had failed to add some of the current "advanced" interpretations of thought, many of which most certainly would never have commanded the Master's own approval. Not infrequently, it seems, were views put forward in the name of Jesus which are directly contradicted by the plain teaching repeatedly referred to him in our earliest and most reliable sources. In some cases these contradictions seem not to have been noticed by the gospel editors. In other cases harmonistic efforts are in evidence; some rather far-fetched and drastic, others rather clever, and all well-meant and probably justified by the need of the hour. As will be seen in our later studies, we must ever be on the alert to distinguish these earlier and later strands in the gospels; for one leads us quite clearly into

the inner thought of the historic Jesus, while the other takes us far afield, and leads into a thousand vagaries such as the church has found to be so disastrous for steady ethical progress.

On first thought, the inexperienced student is inclined to ejaculate, "Then we can never know Jesus as he was, if such a heavy cloud of tradition, myth, and dogma exists on the pages of the gospels." And not a few cry out in despair, "Better leave us to our comfortable delusions than destroy our firm faith with uncertainty and perplexity." So strong has been the emphasis upon conformity to traditional belief rather than upon truth, and truth alone, as Jesus insisted.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all, then, and one that makes it almost impossible for the average young person to get a "near" view of Jesus, is the fact that practically all of the home, church, and school training in religious matters up to recent times has been along the line of literal acceptance of the gospel story without any discrimination whatever between earlier and later sources; between evident fact and easily demonstrable fiction. Such unscientific laxity would be utterly unforgivable in any other field of modern thought. Certainly here, in the field

of religion, which above all others should seek after truth and which boasts of discipleship to one of the most honest men who has yet lived, we should find bed-rock honesty.

The fact should be recalled, of course, that human nature everywhere and at all times has been likewise conservative with regard to its great traditional leaders. Jesus' case is only one of many known to history. And the study of all of these parallel cases throws a veritable flood of light upon the popular nature of the gospels. It renders one much more cautious in the acceptance of the wonder stories, which are really the loving tributes of devoted but untutored folk whose religion calls for high emotional coloring, rather than careful adherence to fact.

By dint of much scholarly effort, the world is slowly recovering, not alone its ancient Egypt and Palestine and Babylonia, its Greece and Rome, its India and China, but also its leading exponents of religion. These worthies are being brought back to life again as if they truly belonged to our times. The very dust of centuries which has tended to conceal their true greatness must now be removed with a patience equal to the devotion of their disciples, who found it diffi-

cult to express their admiration and gratitude in other terms than those of wonder-story and hero-worship. In a day which is priding itself more and more upon its absolute accuracy, and its refusal to be led away by any lure whatever from the strict path of historical fact and the carefully tested proofs of scientific study, one might well hesitate to build the delicate fabric of his religious faith upon traditions which the best scholarship of several generations has now laid aside as unverified and quite unnecessary to the highest expression of practical, ethical living.

Possessing so much better historic perspective, as we do to-day, and having learned the value of scientific patience, we need not be surprised if gradually there is opening to the vision of our times a knowledge of Jesus such as no previous generation has yet known. And while it is true that the wonder-picture which the warm child-imagination of the earlier followers felt obliged to conjure up has forever passed from the pages of history, there has come, in place of it, a picture of earnest human character from which the intelligent moral forces of our times would part with a great deal more reluctance because of its intrinsic worth for the education of our youth.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AMONG THE PROPHETS

It would be difficult to find, in all the sweep of history, such a succession of morally earnest and practical teachers of lofty ideals as may be discovered in the prophetic line reaching from Amos of Tekoa to John of Judea, popularly styled "the Baptist." These were men who, over a troublous period of some eight centuries, succeeded in spurring the consciences of a saving minority of the fathers of Israel to superhuman sacrificial effort. They also kept alive, against tremendous odds, that love of truth and eagerness to do the will of the Highest which have proved to be among the richest portions of the religious heritage of all succeeding times.

Into this rare company, and with all of their prestige and inspiration back of him, came Jesus of Nazareth. Whether he took this step of deliberate personal choice, or through the wise guidance of his father, Joseph, or of some far-seeing scribe who appreciated the unusual youthful in-

terest of the carpenter's son, we may never know. Some as yet unknown experience seems to have aroused in the boy a determination to do the utmost will of God, and perhaps a yearning to be a prophet-preacher to his beloved Jewish people.

If anyone is in doubt as to the influence which such a group of leaders might exert upon the impressionable mind of a hungry-hearted, small-town lad, let him set the writings and heroic deeds of these great prophetic preachers before an average group of similar youth in any of our American villages to-day, and then watch the electric transformation in the more earnest minds of the group. Properly presented, the highly dramatic story of these wonderful men is bound to capture the imagination of such as have had a reasonable ethical-social training in home, school, and church.

That Jesus was completely won by the story of daring, idealism, and endurance told in the prophetic books is evident on every page of the synoptic gospels. His mind was fairly saturated with their pungent sayings. His speech again and again breaks out into the rhythm of their balanced poetry, especially in moments when his mind was

swayed by deep indignation or love. Commenting at times upon some of the great passages from their powerful pens, he too rose to similar poetic heights. We may well believe that, if his life had been spared for the decades which the careers of most of the prophets covered, he too would have been counted among the lofty poets of Israel.

Jesus' life was set against a fairly dull background of mediocrity, as far as contemporary leadership of a lively moral type was concerned. All the more striking was the contrast of his impassioned life. Because he lived in a day when the conventional scribal teaching was practically law to scholar and peasant alike, it was not deemed good form to take issue with their decisions, too often received as the final will of God. But Jesus had fed his soul upon the fiery earnestness of the unconventional and intensely honest prophets of his race, at least in the later years of his youth. He had found in his intimate experiences with the common laboring people, as did the Amoses and Micahs before him, how lacking in ethical results was the teaching of the complacent spiritual guides of the times. As a result, he found his heart burning with the same

indignant protests against ecclesiastical tyranny, formality, and heartlessness as those his teachers had felt.

Thoroughly believing that God had spoken in the prophets and in the passions of his own soul, he could not, as a lover of his people and of truth as well, refuse to throw himself into the struggle for a loftier ethics and the full human rights which he believed the designated leaders were wrongfully withholding from the less cultured common people of Palestine. Bitter indeed was his revolt against traditionalism. Having himself been pressed through the mould of conventional thought in his more tender years, and now seeing how far short of complete expression the standardized methods of the Jewish hierarchy left the masses of the people, he chose as his slogan: *"The will of God, and the deliverance of the people,"* and plunged into the battle to the death. And full well did he know that there could be no quarter given or expected till the bitter end.

Such a complete break with the recognized scribal leadership of the Jewish people, and the painful necessity of having to take a public stand upon all matters at issue, must have caused Jesus many hours of agony. Was there a single man

in the whole land who could possibly understand and sympathize with him in these strange revolutionary emotions? Would he not be condemned on every hand for daring to differ from the priests and scribes? Could he hope for any reasonable backing from any portion of the people? Blind and unthinking as the masses seemed to be, could he expect there to find even an hour's hearing for his new-found hopes? Of course there were radical groups always standing ready to utilize such leadership as he might offer, but their methods led inevitably to useless bloodshed; and was that worth while? Could he—would God—stand for that? Would his family, his relatives, and his town friends countenance such a departure from the accepted interpretation of religion?

Over and over again must he have weighed many such questions, passing through the torments of uncertainty; now leaning one way, in his desire to be true to the faith of his fathers, and again flushing hot with indignation at himself to think that he could, even for a moment, turn his face from that higher will of Truth and God. In his best moments, his heart told him where his plain duty lay.

It was in such hours of turbulence that Jesus

learned the value of prayer. His suffering heart worked out for him a new language with which to address God. Out of burning need he pressed into the presence of One who theretofore had been known merely by the hearing of the ear. New depths of need brought also new fountains of satisfaction. Was his soul lifted to heaven? Or was God coming down from the skies to give solace to one who yearned, as never before man yearned, to know the will divine? Certainly, in the desperate days when scribe and business associate, mother and brothers and sisters, and even his closest friends, failed to appreciate the depths of his feelings, he found but one refuge sufficient for his weary mind, and that he called the quiet place of communion with God and his own heart.

There was one other source of keen satisfaction in these days of trial. That was in the fellowship of the prophets who, he found to his great surprise and comfort, had passed through very similar experiences. He found himself facing the indifferent or hostile crowds with Amos at Bethel. He was walking back through Jerusalem and on south to lonely Tekoa with the defeated poet-preacher, wondering how God could expect his truth to live when its bearers were made to pass

through such terrible ordeals. He found himself writing philippics and appeals in the hope that there might somewhere be found a few righteous souls who would give heed to the call of the higher truth.

Or, again, he found himself suffering with poor Jeremiah as he watched his crushed and desperate people march away into hopeless captivity and almost certain oblivion. And here, too, in the light of history he looked forward with the Spokesman for Jerusalem toward the distant day of hope when God's laws should be written in the hearts of men, and not entrusted simply to the unfeeling pages of parchment which perishes with the using. So, although his contemporaries gave him little to encourage his new-found faith, he did find a wonderful uplift in the fellowship of the prophets of the centuries before him. His gratitude for this comfort is often expressed in his talks to the common people.

In the course of time, it became clear to Jesus that the supposed "words of the Lord" which the scribes had so long heralded as special revelations vouchsafed to "the chosen people" for their safe guidance, were after all only the convictions of human beings like himself, and therefore al-

ways open to revision. A great chasm seemed now to yawn between the former conventional and undiscriminating period of his life, and the present alert attitude of mind in which he felt obliged to bring every religious custom and belief into judgment. He began to fear lest he be following, even unconsciously, the ways of men rather than those higher levels of thinking which he confidently believed the ways of God.

Gone forever now were the old-time formal prayers and fasts and sacrifices, still observed by the thoughtless masses of his people, and extolled by priest and scribe as the necessary observance of the will of high Heaven. But in place of the outworn formalities had come that vivid new sense of inner reality which the prophets had declared to be the only religion worth while.

It hurt him, like the thrust of a spear, to feel himself forced apart by conviction from concurrence in the views of the teachers of Israel. But it gave him absolute confidence in his conclusions to find that the greater prophets all shared both his convictions and his bitter-sweet experience in defending his views against the tremendous odds represented by the popular beliefs and the prestige of the scribes. In the utter loneliness of his

separation from all that his soul had counted dear in times past, he would cry out as to One who could hear and understand against this exceeding bitterness of isolation, particularly from those who stood, by ties of blood and love, nearest and dearest to him. In these crucial moments, God spoke to him through the experiences of the prophets in no uncertain voice. This consolation brought a new tenderness into his life, and gave him patience under misunderstanding. It also put the needed iron into his soul, that he might be prepared for greater trials.

Jesus must have arrived at something like this stage of experience when the startling work of John the Baptist attracted his attention and induced him to leave the carpenter shop for a brief trip to the fords of the Jordan and perhaps to the Temple in the Holy City. The psychology of Jesus' experience at this striking period can be understood in no other way than as a complete transformation of mind.

In John, much to his amazement, he found all of the best he had learned to love in the elder prophets made intensely real. Here, in this one mighty character lived again Moses and Elijah; Isaiah, Amos, and Micah; Hosea and Jeremiah.

But John also added to the profound dignity and terrible earnestness of his prophetic predecessors qualities of his own, as we shall see later, which greatly endeared him to the Galilean carpenter. John, in the judgment of Jesus, was in no sense inferior to the best of his kind. Hence the indelible impression which the new prophet made upon the sensitive and maturing soul of the visitor from the North.

Jesus later looked back upon this lower ford of the Jordan as Elijah and Moses might have revered the slopes of Horeb. It was the scene of his awakening, of his dedication, to a great new life. And to John, the herald of God, he gave unstinted praise for being the divine instrument through whose splendid character he first saw the full light. If, as is suggested by one of Jesus' later disciples and biographers (Mark 1:11), the young carpenter threw himself into the new and dangerous mission of a prophet with such dedicatory words as those of Psalm 2:7^{b} and Isaiah 42:1 coursing through his mind, we may perhaps catch a glimpse here of that initial and vivid moment in Jesus' experience when all that was old, all that was in preparation within him, became new. Here was imparted the divine impetus which was

destined to carry him—not without intense suffering and protest, but doggedly and without flinching, yes, even rapturously, through the next two years of heart-breaking experiences.

Jesus put his whole soul into the ceremony of dedication in the sacred waters of the Jordan. A new covenant of the heart was there and then ratified between him and his God. God's least wish was henceforth more than law to him. And the wonderful sense of peace which swept over his spirit as the accompaniment of this act of devotion fell upon him like a refreshing summer's breeze; a sufficient guarantee, in his estimation, that his Father's love and power were able to carry him successfully through his newly-assumed task, whatever the cost of the service (Ps. 2:7).

The hopeful and dramatic words of the enthusiastic Prophet of the Restoration (Isaiah 42:1) seem to have dominated his thoughts at this stage in his progress. God had been waiting anxiously and eagerly for him to arrive at this moment of decision. And he was determined that his God should never have cause to regret this choice of him as the bearer of His latest and all-important message to his people. He felt certain that the True Religion was rapidly taking

form in his mind. It appealed to him as a fresh revelation from heaven. As surely as God was speaking within him, men must listen and believe the good news.

As Jesus thought over the methods which the various prophets had used in winning a hearing, and spurred on to the highest pitch of excitement and confidence by the success of John's practical work, he made up his mind that he, too, would combine the passionate preaching to the multitudes with the effective, though quiet, methods of personal persuasion (Isaiah 42:2-4). Thus he would preserve the educational standards and the dignity of his work, avoiding every temptation to resort to cheap forms of publicity, even though the latter might promise him momentary popularity.

In the turbulent but rapturous days which followed this secret recognition of his new prophetic status, the inspiring words of Moses (as he believed the author of Deuteronomy to be) appear to have been his guiding light (Deut. 8:3; 6:13, 16). Like his great prophetic forbear, Jesus resolved that nothing could possibly tempt him to turn one hair's breadth from the sacred path of duty which his growing convictions led him to

enter. Although the whole world were to be thrown into the balance against him, yet he would be true to his God-given message. It meant more to him to have the approval of God and his own conscience than to gain the applause of the fickle multitude.

It is probable that for many years since his acquaintance with the writings of the prophets had begun, Jesus had fondly dreamed of the day when he might somehow be released from the heavy family burdens and the work of the carpenter shop, to take up the tasks of a free public teacher of religion. Now that the decision had been reached, and the full freedom of his calling began to dawn upon him, he seemed almost appalled at the extent of the joyous emotion which filled his being. Suddenly, as through a vision from above, all of his dearest hopes seemed fully realized. He stood sobered by the issues of life and death which looked him full in the face.

On the one hand, he saw Opportunity pointing toward a career of power and showing him how he could easily bend the passions of men to his will. His name would be on every man's lips, and the surging crowds would seek to wear themselves out in his service. On the other hand, he

saw the stern challenge of hardship and loneliness, calling him to thrust aside all thought of self and personal glory, that he might minister to the highest spiritual welfare of his people and so find in their upbuilding the kingdom of love and human fellowship. This, it became plain to him, was the way of unpopularity and misunderstanding, the way which the faithful prophets had trod so uncomplainingly. And this was the road marked out for him by that will of the Father before which he bowed as final.

Because Jesus was naturally happy and optimistic by temperament, and because he had found so much of good in his social mingling with men, his joyful emotions tended to predominate. If, for a brief period of reflection, the sadder vision of inevitable rejection and personal danger arose before him, he would react quickly as if determined to minimize his own feelings and sense of loss. For he was confident that even there the will of God would surely find accomplishment, as it had in the lives of his predecessors. In his modesty, he hardly dared to classify himself with the great men of old; but he was no coward.

As Jesus burst into Galilee, after his brief apprenticeship under John the Baptist, it seems to

have been with the words of the enthusiastic and daring Isaiah upon his lips that he bent himself to the glorious task of making his Galilean folk catch the full meaning of his new gospel of love and hope. Did he, as later Christian writers liked to believe, think of Isaiah 9: 1-7 as a long-predicted description of his own mission—that of *royalty,* and giving him the right to consider himself the destined ruler of the nations? Or did he, with characteristic humility and good sense, think of himself as having a still higher honor than that which a precarious Palestinian throne might offer —that of the bearer of the light before the feet of Him whom Heaven should send, and earth must receive, as the divine Savior of all men, both Jew and foreigner?

Certainly much that is in the earlier strands of the gospels points strongly to the fact that Jesus and John both looked for a Prince of Glory, a Son of Man (as numerous Jewish apocalypses of the time described Him), who should descend from the very presence of God to rule the world. This mighty potentate would act as vice-regent of Heaven until such time as God Himself saw fit to take over the sway of the earth in his own right.

Surely the latter view seems to accord with his

every word and act as pictured in our earliest and most reliable gospel sources. From the merest attempt at flattery on the part of his friends, and from the least suggestion that he was great or godlike, Jesus appears to have shrunk with a humility almost painful in its earnestness (Mark 10: 18). He was tremendously serious when he advised his followers to cultivate the virtues of self-examination and modesty. He would have been the last man in the world to parade his perfection, or to claim the prerogatives which he regarded as belonging in absolute measure to God alone.

The most clarifying statements which Jesus ever gave as to his own mission were couched in the language of the prophets, whose thoughts and methods so thoroughly mastered and inspired him in his brief ministry. In spite of the fact that later editors have filled the gospel pages with the titles bestowed upon Jesus after his death (and of course very common in the days when the gospels were written), the early sources are reasonably consistent in showing that he himself cared for no other title than that of "prophet." And he used this sparingly and with considerable apology, as if he deemed himself (as said above) hardly

worthy of rank with the great men whom he so deeply revered.

As the bearer of a human and merciful gospel (Hosea 6:6), one which transcended the mere outward forms of the common ritual, he honored himself, particularly when his right to proclaim so simple a truth was challenged by his adversaries. For him there could be no other gospel than that stressed by the ethical prophets—the building of a deep-down moral purpose in the human heart, a purpose which was founded on sacrificial love, transforming the whole life in its cleansing power, and yet extending to heaven in its outreach after purity and perpetuity.

Doubtless the best definition Jesus ever gave, and the only justification he felt the need of making, for this astonishingly creedless, riteless mission of his, was the one in his first address in the synagogue at Nazareth after his sojourn with John in the South. He was trying to make his fellow-townsmen and his relatives understand his changed point of view, and also to show them how naturally his friendly career as a carpenter among them had now blossomed out into the riper flower of prophetic thought. He felt certain that they would be as enthusiastic as he was over

the new meaning which had dawned upon him in the words of the Poet of the Restoration (Isa. 61: 1-3). This was his startling announcement:

"I have had a marvelous experience in the days I have been with John at the fords of the Jordan. Like the great prophet of old, whose words we have so often heard read here in our synagogue, I have felt the thrill of Heaven's call to service. Not different in spirit, perhaps, from the work I have tried to offer you through my carpenter shop; yet now I feel impelled to lay aside my trade and spend the rest of my life bearing cheer and courage to the downtrodden of Israel; to mend broken hearts; to assure all of our Jewish people that the day of God's intervention on their behalf is certainly at hand!" (Luke 4: 16-22[a].)

"Do you ask me," he continued, "the source of my conviction in uttering such a surprising statement? I can answer in one way only: God Himself has spoken within my soul! He Himself has bidden me tell you that the Great Day for which we have all prayed so long cannot be far hence. Are not the signs of the times very clear? Our sufferings, our hopes, and the burden of ages of prayers all point to the time in the near future! I beg you come, join me in this preparation of soul

which God requires of all His people. Only through deep repentance and most earnest preparation can that blessed Day be hastened."

Enough has been said to show that, as our early accounts bear witness, Jesus' mind was saturated with the poetic truths uttered by the prophets of ancient days. Their words rang in his attentive ears, taught him to believe in the greatness of the Jewish future, made him eager—where most men were utterly indifferent—to offer himself on the sacrificial altar of his people's welfare. Hence he was led, under the immediate inspiration of John's great example, to enrol himself among the prophets, that their splendid work should not be forgotten and that the will of God for the world should not be frustrated.

Well did Jesus know, from the careers of the martyr prophets, the fate which he might expect at the hands of a materialistic hierarchy, the formalized scribal leadership, and an uneducated and indifferent public. But he deliberately gave up the quiet and the shelter of the Nazareth home and shop, exposing himself henceforth to the tragic fate of the prophet, the fate of the exile. This was no alluring prospect for one of weak soul. But so strong was the call within him, so

powerful the example of the prophets, and so pressing the need of his unfortunate people, that in all of these combined appeals he felt himself driven to the task before him.

Indeed, Jesus kissed the hand of Fate which smote him forward. All the currents of his life were quickened; a new light crept into his countenance, a new firmness into his eye and voice. His words were tense with a love which no mere language could convey to his hearers. They knew instinctively that they were in the presence of a man who walked as seeing God, whose messages came from the secret springs whence men are wont to draw power for ministration in the critical moments of history.

Only those who have in like fashion been lifted into sacrificial consecration to the highest good of all men can clearly comprehend the power with which this gospel of love and good cheer gripped the being of the carpenter-prophet just nineteen centuries ago. And—shall it not be said?—only those to-day who drink from the same eternal springs of dedication, and are willing to pay the price required for the possession of a living gospel, are destined to find that satisfaction of soul which all men crave, but as yet so few find.

CHAPTER III

A RARE FRIENDSHIP—AND ITS RESULTS

So far in our study, we have merely suggested the vital part which John the Baptist played in the life of Jesus. The documents upon which we must rely for a fair picture of the relationships of these two great characters are of two strikingly different types: First, those which are quite evidently early, unstudied, and blunt; showing that they lie pretty close to the facts. Second, evident attempts, upon the part of the later church apologists, to explain away what to their time were embarrassing situations, so as to make sure that the reader would understand how much above John Jesus really was. They tried desperately to amass evidence, from the lips of both John and of Jesus, to substantiate this point of view.

Scholars have little trouble in distinguishing between the two groups of writings, for the secondary materials carry on their very face too much of anxiety and argument to guarantee their worth to the observant mind. Again we must fall back upon the narrative nucleus of the gospel of *Mark,*

and upon the *Sayings* of Jesus as retained in the Synoptics. And even here one will notice that the church harmonists have been at work, adding contradictory titles and phrases of explanation which represent the early church point of view, rather than that of Jesus himself. Illustrative details will be presented as our study proceeds.

If one man has been more misunderstood than Jesus, we may be sure that it is John of Judea. It often falls to the lot of the originator of a movement to be superseded by one of his disciples who overshadows the Master in the minds of the later times. And, not infrequently, the first leader receives scant respect for the laborious and pioneer part which he has played. If for any reason the two movements are forced into separation the tendency is naturally strong for the followers of the two sides to imagine that their Masters originally shared their feelings of aloofness or suspicion. So later history is commonly read back into an innocent past.

If ever a disciple paid loyal tribute to his Teacher, and that without the least thought of embarrassment or apology, Jesus certainly did both in the general program he followed and in his public addresses, whenever occasion brought

the subject of John's place in the life of the Jewish people into prominence. According to our best sources, therefore, and quite contrary to the common opinion which has most persistently and naturally followed the later tradition, Jesus showed the most profound admiration and respect for John and his mission. Even where he felt obliged to differ from John, in matters of personal conviction and methods of work, Jesus carried on in the spirit of the finest friendship. He refused to be drawn into argument against John, and yet stood up for his own right to think for himself with splendid independence.

John and Jesus seem to have passed through very much the same experience, and to have reached very similar conclusions as to the needs of the time and the type of religious training required by the situation. After the two men came together in common work, it is more than likely that each influenced the other; although the fact that John entered upon his public work first, and that he was apparently quite conservative and already well set in his thought and type of campaign before Jesus joined hands with him, may suggest that John changed much less easily than his disciple.

The years of preparatory meditation through which John seems to have passed before beginning his public mission, and his comparative isolation from the mass movements of his time, were naturally conducive to the sterner, more non-social view of life. With all his fine prophetic earnestness and fiery denunciation of the moral laxity of his ecclesiastical contemporaries, however, there seems to have been a strain of rough tenderness in his make-up which rendered his friendship a possession of rare worth. Indeed, Jesus and John appear to have supplemented each other's nature to an unusual degree.

Little if any credence can be given to the childhood stories (Luke 1:5—2:52) which seek, at a late day (100-150 A.D.?), to solve the problem of the relations of the two men. In fact, the rough Greek and the loose connection of this section, as well as the clear attempt of its author to discriminate against John to the advantage of Jesus, all indicate that this may be a second-century interpolation having nothing to do with the original book of Luke.

If only these two later prophets could have been spared to give the world, at first hand, the ripe conclusions of their unusual experience! Or if

they could even have written out, like the earlier prophets whose works seem to have inspired them, some of their public addresses or their private thought, how much richer the world would have been for their messages! As it is, we must rely upon such occasional statements as we may glean from the writings of men at least a generation after their time. These documents, as has been said, have been colored by the reflection of Christian workers whose existence was most precarious, and whose heart-aches were assuaged by the use of these accounts in their earlier oral or more simple written form.

The most reliable, and perhaps the most fascinating, account of the friendship of John and Jesus is recorded in Mark 1: 1-15; 10: 1; 11: 27-33 and in Luke 3: 1-18; 7: 16-20, 22-28[a], 31-35. These very brief narratives are distinctly in a class by themselves, and of a very different quality from the later apologetic narratives dealing with the same period of activity. They place both men in a much more favorable light than tradition has commonly assumed, revealing the real independence, the virility, and the fine sportsmanlike qualities of both leaders.

Thus runs the reconstructed story: After long-

continued prayer and fasting, John appears to have received some sort of vision in which the stirring appeal of Isaiah 40: 3 is heard as his inner call to prepare the Jewish people for the coming from heaven of God's appointed Savior. Assuming that this event was very near, and urged on by his vision to let the several millions of Jewish folk in and around Palestine know the Good News, John took his stand at the lower ford of the Jordan, preaching to the throngs of pilgrims who were wending their way to the Holy City for the annual feasts.

John seems to have created a tremendous stir throughout the length and breadth of the country. Both in the city of Jerusalem, and everywhere along the countryside and in the villages where most of them lived, they spread the news of this prophet of God with feverish excitement. The common people listened with mingled curiosity and interest, the religious leaders with utter dismay and scorn, to the story of John's daring venture. "Was this a veritable voice of God?" said some. "Was this a feeble and crazy imitation of Elijah?" asked others. But, as usual, only the comparatively few among the more earnest and daring of the peasantry clung to John with con-

viction. Perhaps some tarried out of sheer curiosity, hoping to witness, at the hands of this new prodigy, some belated miracle which might furnish a thrill for their barren lives.

John's utter indifference to the rites and sacrifices of the great feasts, his concentration upon the ethical features of religion, his emphasis upon the sterner side of the Jewish faith, his remarkable assurance that the great Day of deliverance was really at hand, and his fearless exposure of the sins of his people, even those of the priests and scribes in high places and of the wily prince Herod Antipas upon the throne of Galilee and Perea, all lent wings to the rumors which filled the land with his fame. No man was more talked about, none more loved by the pious peasantry. Probably none was more hated and feared, as it became evident that this man was really catching the ear of the people and might, at any dread moment, stir up trouble for the nation. For the Roman authorities watched against incipient revolution as a cat watches a mouse under its paws. Many an outbreak had already taken place on the part of the restive Jews. Any moment might see a new "Christ" arise to promise his followers safety and protection from heaven if they would

cast in their lot with him. Little Palestine was, in fact, a veritable volcano ready to burst out into flames of revolution at the merest provocation.

While John gave no heed to the fiery Zealots who urged him to lead the advocates of force against Rome, he nevertheless resorted to scathing invective against priest and ruler after the fashion of the prophets before his time. To their very faces, he rebuked the emissaries of the scribes when they cautioned him that his plain speech might get him into trouble. He repudiated their claims to spiritual authority over the destinies of Israel. Their implied criticism of him, and their skepticism regarding his predictions of the Coming Day of Judgment, aroused him to bitterest denunciation of their hard-heartedness and hypocrisy as self-styled guides of the people. John ridiculed their attitude of superiority, laughed at their pretensions to holiness, and publicly called upon them to repent as the chief of sinners. He threatened them with the doom of hell if they did not yield immediately to his prophetic warnings.

Such an affront to their pride and position was too much for the exalted representatives of the hierarchy. They left him, breathing dire ven-

geance upon "this upstart ignoramus, this insane and dangerous revolutionist." They noted the fact that the radical elements were particularly drawn to John's following, Galileans above all others. And they knew how to use this information against John.

On the other hand, the humble Jewish folk, who yearned for a Savior to free them from the galling yoke of the foreigner and to give them the destiny for which centuries of "promises" had conditioned them, flocked to the side of John from all directions, hoping against hope that this man might *himself* be the anticipated Deliverer. Yet they marveled at his retiring nature, at his refusal to welcome the backing of the revolutionary groups who urged him to lead them on to victory. And they witnessed no "miracles" by which men of his type usually sought to guarantee the authenticity of their messages. Those who did accept the rite of cleansing baptism at his hand, and wholeheartedly sought to prepare their lives for the coming of God's heavenly Messiah, made up the bulk of the disciple group which clung to him for the few months he was allowed to work without interference.

On all sides John was hailed as *The Prophet* of

the times, and he seems not to have discouraged his friends from using this title with reference to him. With the title of "Christ," which savored of revolution and the use of the bloody and futile sword, he would have nothing to do. His was distinctly a mission of peaceful preparation for God's coming Kingdom. The Son of Man and his angelic forces from heaven would take care of the enemies of Israel in due time (Charles, Book of Enoch, 46: 1-6; 48: 1-10; 62: 1-16).

It was in the midst of such a movement, with its attendant enthusiasm and danger, that Jesus arrived from Galilee. Like the others, he was wondering to what all this unheard-of interest might lead. Little did he realize what this journey would mean to his life. But his heart was sad for the griefs of his people. He longed, as few others did, for that revival of religious interest in his nation which might prove to be the forerunner of better days, even ushering in the Day of Days itself when God's hand would again be felt in the destinies of Israel. The reports which his friends of Nazareth had brought back to him had kindled his intense interest, for they sounded much like the echoes of his own heart. And now he actually stood in the presence of this mysterious

prophet, who proved to be far more wonderful even than rumor had made him.

Jesus was fairly swept off his feet in his eager response to the appeals of John. He felt drawn, as by a strange magnetic influence, to throw in his lot for good or ill with this man who alone, of all that he had ever known, represented the complete will of Heaven. He found in John's eloquent addresses to the gathering crowds, and in his private teachings to the few most earnest souls, such persuasive corroboration of his own sense of duty, that he forgot all about any projected trip to Jersusalem which he may have had. He simply spent the next few months preparing to further John's cause, the Cause of God and of the Jewish Nation, as best he could.

In spite of the fact that some of our later gospel sources are overanxious to keep Jesus away from John, and not even allow him to be baptized into the discipleship of John (John 1:26-37), it is perfectly plain—if one will follow the implication of the earlier narratives—that Jesus not only counted himself a full disciple of the elder man, but that he had at that time no further plans for his own future aside from the fortunes of John, and under his leadership. It seems quite clear,

furthermore, that Jesus' plans for a separate future became fully crystallized only at the time of John's imprisonment. Therefore some of the startling experiences which Jesus is supposed to have had, in one tumultuous overturn at the time of his baptism, and certainly some of the more mature conclusions at which he arrived, may better be referred to that crucial moment when John's whole movement was in danger of collapsing unless one of his disciples stepped into the breach.

One thing which won Jesus' devotion, aside from the splendid earnestness and boldness of John, was the latter's deep sense of reverence in face of his almost impossible task. Here the two men were drawn into the closest bonds of brotherhood. Each had his heart set, not upon personal preferment, but upon the will of God and the happy future of the earth. Each had entered upon his course of action without knowledge of the other's purpose, and solely in obedience to the high call of human need. Perhaps the strongest bond of all was the fact that each man realized, in taking up his prophetic work, that he might be called upon to pay the ultimate cost of such service with his life. For each knew

well what had befallen the outspoken men of God in years before.

With all of these ties to bind them together, we need not wonder that Jesus and John enjoyed a friendship of rare beauty and strength. It is a burning shame that the petty rivalries of their later disciples, and the unfortunate interpretations of sectarian interests, induced the rank and file of both groups to lose sight of this splendid comradeship still so clearly portrayed in the earliest sources of our gospels.

Whether the two men arrived separately at the conclusion that the Kingdom of God must come by intervention of Heaven, and by no means through the use of force, we may not be sure, although it seems quite likely. In any case, both seem to share this common faith in the early coming of the Mighty One from the presence of God (Mark 1: 7, 8, 15; Luke 4: 19; Matthew 25: 31-46).

They may not have known that long centuries before their time men like Ipuwer of Egypt (2000 B.C.) and Zoroaster of Persia (at least 600 B.C.) had advanced similar hopes for their peoples. These, too, had found in the miseries and moral indifference of their times clear signs that the sun-gods whom they worshipped were call-

ing all men to repentance in preparation for the immediate and personal reign of the gods upon earth.

Ezekiel (*cir.* 586 B.C.) and the writer of the Book of Daniel (*cir.* 167 B.C.), among numbers of other Jewish authors, had taken pains, likewise, to prepare the minds of the people for heavenly intervention, seeing that no human power could avail against the might of alien armies. Perhaps under the influence of such apocalyptic prophets as these, and with more or less knowledge of the hopes which men of other nations had also entertained, the two friends became persuaded that the Day of Hope was not far distant.

Perhaps their visions and angelic voices from heaven, as they called their inner convictions, led them to this conclusion. Very likely the spirit of revolutionary unrest among the Jews and the dread of a horrible war, with its hate and bloodshed, played a considerable part in their thought. Hence their impassioned earnestness to get the people into a frame of mind which should bring peace to the earth and forever prevent the low lusts of men from despoiling the earth.

Many a time the two friends must have dis-

cussed the details of the great Day of Judgment, both thinking, of course, in the terms of popular Jewish apocalyptic, and feeling no need of further proof that their convictions were well grounded. That hour of destiny was known to God alone. It would come very suddenly, hence the need of being ready for Heaven's call at an instant's notice. Vast pageants of angels would precede the marvelous Prince of Glory as he came amid many signs and wonders to occupy his earthly throne in the city of Jerusalem. Then all men, the living and the dead, would be haled before God's Messenger to answer for their conduct, and to receive such commendation or punishment as He deemed worthy in each case (Matthew 25: 31-46). Finally, under His sway and with the Jewish people as the faithful and honored nucleus of the renovated order, the earth would be made ready for God's heavenly rule, all nations yielding to His enlightened and beneficent rule. Any who attempted to oppose Him must receive their just punishment in the awful fate of the Lower World of fire and death.

Something like this common faith seems to have driven both John and Jesus to that spirit of breathless urgency and fiery earnestness which

peculiarly characterized them in the brief months during which they pursued their mission. Mistaken, as we now know they were, in their reading of the signs of the times and in their expectations of deliverance, there is yet behind all the fanciful nature of their dreams for a better world a solid substratum of ethical requirement which, after all, has been of untold good to the world. And this supreme emphasis which they placed upon the necessity for God-like character drew them together in bonds of dedication which no exigencies of fate or time could possibly efface.

Reference has already been made to the incident reported in Luke 7: 18-28[a], and its simple and more original parallel in Matthew 11: 2-11[a], as well as to the fact that we have in this passage one of the best testimonies to the deep and very natural affection which John and Jesus cherished one for the other. Leaving out the insertions of later generations (which were so anxious to prove that Jesus must have regarded himself, in some heavenly or spiritual sense, as a Christ) and getting behind the times when, as in Luke 7: 21-22, Old Testament references came to be regarded in Christian circles as prophetic of Jesus' future activities; we note that John sent his disciples to

Jesus, some hundred miles distant from the prisoner's lonely habitation, to report upon the encouraging features of Jesus' work in Galilee. One friend, cut off from his life-work and deeply concerned for the future of that work, was appealing for a cheering word from his bosom companion who, with rare fidelity and with boundless enthusiasm and determination, was continuing the mission interrupted when John was abducted by the spies of Herod Antipas.

The later church apologists are evidently mistaken in thinking that John and Jesus discussed at this time the unthinkable question as to whether Jesus himself might possibly have become the "Christ" for whom both men were looking. All of the factors in the situation are against this theological interpretation of a very simple incident. For John, and his ascetic followers who started another movement later spreading to Ephesus and on to the East, never give the least sign of recognizing Jesus' messiahship, politically or in any other way. And careful source-study of the gospels makes exceedingly clear that Jesus felt bitter indeed when his disciples and the Zealots sought to apply the messianic title to him, with, of course, a political

revolution in mind. Furthermore, it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt that all of the later terms suggesting that Jesus considered himself divine, or was so regarded by his contemporaries during his lifetime, are of late origin and unreliable.

No, John was seeking encouragement. And Jesus showed fine tact in belittling any misunderstandings which disciples may have built up between the two friends. He reminded John that the dream of their favorite Bible poet (Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1) seemed now, for the first time in history, actually to be receiving fulfilment. Surely these Old Testament writings had no reference whatever to *Jesus,* and he would never think of so misinterpreting them. Of course the gospel editors took this liberty on various occasions. But to follow their prejudices means to turn fact to fiction and to miss the plain thought of Jesus altogether. Besides, Jesus resented the suggestion that he make a cheap charlatan of himself and sell his gospel to the crowds through pretense of miracle (Mark 8:11-13). Later times could accept the argument from miracle, but never Jesus.

Very simply and beautifully, then, the disciple sent back good cheer to his unfortunate Master, bidding him believe that God must soon act for the deliverance of the nation, and of John himself as well. Not content with this demonstration of unshaken friendship, Jesus proceeded to address the crowds about him in one of the finest eulogies which one man has ever spoken of another. He rose to great heights of eloquence as he described point by point the true splendor of John's character and the superlative importance of his divine mission as the long-awaited Messenger of the Prince of Heaven! (Malachi 3: 1.)

What a noble example of independence and loyalty to God John had shown them, standing four-square to all of the winds of opposition which had blown against him. Never for one moment had he yielded to the tempting offers of the Zealots, nor shrunk before the bitter attacks of the Jerusalem authorities. To all seducing flattery and promises of ease he had turned a deaf ear. He stood solitary, alone, towering above his times like a rock of ages—a refuge for the weak, and an everlasting honor to the God who chose him for so great and so difficult a task! So

spoke Jesus, incidentally laying bare his own splendid soul in eulogizing his best friend (Matthew 11:7-11[a]).

This one dramatic passage alone, if it were all that we had on the subject, should be enough to convince the modern reader that Jesus looked up to John with profound respect and manly love. Both in the rich qualities of his character, and in the fearless conduct of his mission, Jesus regarded his Master as second to no prophet who had ever lived. And particularly had he been marked for the favor of God by being selected out of many to act as the herald of the coming Kingdom and the immediate forerunner of the heavenly Prince of Peace!

In all his reflection upon John, Jesus never once gave a hint that he considered himself worthy of outranking his Teacher. One of his last acts of fidelity, and one quite worthy of our modern traditions of respect for the honorable dead, is suggested in a single brief sentence in Mark 10:1 (following rightly after 9:30). Here Jesus crossed the Jordan from Judea into Perea to gaze, for one long, last time, upon the scene where he had committed his all to the prophetic work under the magic inspiration of John. Knowing

that his own time was now in all probability quite short, Jesus drew inspiration for his coming days of bitter trial in recalling the noble Master's faithful service and his patient death in the cause of the Kingdom. This spot represented both friendly devotion and a Gethsemane of dedication to that will which is ever the best for the understanding heart.

CHAPTER IV

PROPHET OF IRRESISTIBLE POWER

Jesus seems to have been a man of tremendous magnetism. Men of earnest moral type were drawn to him as steel filings to a magnet. They recognized his mastery, too, whether or not they realized that his experience had been richer and more revolutionary than theirs. Men of selfish and evil purpose reacted just as strongly to this virile nature, only they were repelled, as if there were no real affinity of thought and purpose to bind them together.

Women and children trusted Jesus implicitly. They were at home in his unaffected presence. He made their interests his own. His stories were full of references to their daily experiences. They knew, without asking, that he had played and worked, suffered and rejoiced, just as they had. His understanding of them made a most effective appeal to their imagination. They knew that he had nothing personal to gain from his contact with the crowds of Galilee. Every line of his face

told the story of his sincere love for his Jewish people.

How true it is that only a loving nature can actually conceive of a God of love. For human beings commonly think of the divine, the perfect, after their own inner likeness. Therefore, when we say that the supreme and all-controlling reality in Jesus' experience was his deep sense of the presence and interest of a fatherly God, we are by such assertion paying tribute to the fine religious strain, the kindly and protective elements, in Jesus' own nature.

He was so sure that everything worth while in life must be the will of God, and he was so certain of his own powers of self-mastery, that he naturally felt God in his sphere could also achieve all things ideal to which he had set his hand. He could not conceive of God ever failing in his undertaking for the world's progress. And this simple faith gave him unbounded courage in carrying out the ideals which he believed were implanted within him by the hand of God himself.

Jesus had no vast and massive desert scenery at hand to reinforce these experiences of his inmost soul. He could not, like an Elijah or a Mohammed, retire to secluded desert caves, or feel

the world of power resident in the rolling waves of sand where many a kindred soul has quickened his sense of Ultimate Reality. Nor did the modest hills, lakes, and plains of Galilee furnish him an imperishable picture of beauty that might have been his daily inspiration had his lot been cast in the countries far to the East or West of his own impoverished Palestine. What would he not have given for an intimate acquaintance with the wonders of our great oceans, or the opportunity to feast his eyes upon the mighty reaches of the everlasting mountains of Colorado, Canada, Switzerland, or Tibet!

Yet even a peasant environment in a land of no natural grandeur may yield the utmost heights and depths of human experience if the will be strong for goodness, and the soul be hungry for truth. Hence we see the natural fineness of the spirit of Jesus in that, without the especial stimulation of Nature's great forces, and with little else of great proportions in history and only a minimum of classic literature at hand, he yet built a character of monumental grandeur destined to serve as Light and Truth for the nations for all future time.

The sense of the power of God seems first to

have gripped Jesus' imagination on that never-to-be-forgotten day when, under John's magnetic influence, he threw himself heart and soul into the doing of God's will, and knew himself committed henceforth to the hard paths of the Prophet. That this experience was quite unexpected and overwhelming is suggested again and again in our early sources. The very fact that the later generations of gospel writers worked so hard to prove that Jesus must have anticipated such an accession of power is another bit of evidence favoring this point of view. If the so-called baptism and temptation stories, with all of their striking oriental imagery, point any truth at all in Jesus' life, it is that then and there for the first time in his thirty-three years he felt quite carried away by the enthusiasm of this new might which came upon him, as by a burst of light from heaven. He was content to call it the Spirit of his Father laying hold of him for divine purposes. It revealed him to himself, and gave him that enlightened sense of his mission among men which ever after proved his unfailing inspiration.

Of all the high inspirations which come to men, none seems to have such persuasive and abiding influence as this kind of experience. Prophets

may bow in rapture before the beauty and majesty of mountains and valleys, or in awe before the terrors of storm and earthquake, of ocean's sweep, or the boundless spaces of starry worlds, but unless they thereby experience God the Infinite, the matchless sense of Reality by which the soul of man is consciously and most intimately felt to be at one with the innermost life of the Universe, they fail to attain the experience which overwhelmed Jesus at the Jordan.

He then came to know what Socrates had learned through his philosophy, what Gautama grasped under the bo-tree, and Zoroaster on the plateaus and along the streams of Persia—that God was speaking directly to his own soul and commanding his services, for good or ill, all the remaining years of his life. And Jesus yielded with both pride and passion, putting heart and soul into his new calling. Thus was born anew a leader for whom the times were more than ripe.

Probably never after that, in the two brief years which proved to be the narrow limits of his life, did he pass through just such an experience as this. Nor did he need it; for—in spite of the later interpretation placed upon his words, and of the numerous desperate situations into which

he was led—he seems never to have doubted the full justice of his mission, or the power of God to work out, even through his seeming defeat, the victorious Kingdom which He had planned for the world. Nevertheless, if the early sources may speak to us, Jesus did, from time to time, gain new accessions of power, as does any great soul who follows the light of truth with utter abandon.

When, for instance, John was suddenly captured by his enemies, the minions of Herod Antipas, and was carried off to his lonely confinement at Machærus, Jesus was one of the little group of John's disciples who vowed that John's message and mission must not fail, even though the beloved leader had been cruelly thrust aside, perhaps forever. As this loyal band was forced to scatter, therefore, each disciple went his own way determined to advance the work of John as circumstances would permit. Speaking of a crucial time like this, then, it is not by chance that the record says: "And Jesus went back to his home province of Galilee with a new power in his life, the might of the Spirit of God" (Luke 4: 14).

Here, "born again" of desperation, bitter sorrow, and a deep sense of loss, and with love for

John and for God and his people spurring him on, Jesus threw himself into his work of enlightenment and good cheer with a courage never surpassed in all history. More certain than ever that now, in this extremity, God *must* speak out from high heaven, Jesus preached with tremendous fervor of that coming reign of glory which should bless all peoples on the earth.

Then came those days of glorious service in the villages and homes, and along the streets and highways and lake shores of little Galilee. And the sense of the power of God to rebuild human life and to transform it into a thing of exceeding beauty came over him as never before. For men and women began to listen and to believe his message, and their transformed lives bore silent but eloquent witness to the practical nature of the ethical truths which he presented, both in parable and in his personal life.

If John had his hundreds of listeners, Jesus had his thousands. The simple folk of Galilee thronged his pathways and forced him to give up even such leisure moments as he tried to reserve for rest and meditation. They insisted upon hearing this their own prophet "who spake as never man before had spoken." Men even gave up

their business, as he himself had done, to help him carry on this enthusiastic work of getting the nation ready for God's reign. And when he was weighed down with the numberless burdens of the common people, which they laid all too readily upon his willing shoulders, then there came with the hour of need fresh energy to help him forget his weary brain and body, that he might minister to the people in those simple ways which are truly an art in themselves.

It was at such times as these that he would speak of "the lost sheep" among his people who needed an enlightened Shepherd to tell them of God and goodness. Or he would repeat again, with varying detail, his story of how God had given him the needed message and a divine compassion with which to answer their appeals. Never, in his utmost extremity, did he seem to lack the refreshing power which men drank in, almost selfishly, from his devoted life; for he himself drank from those springs of the soul which never fail.

Jesus must have been a man of very sensitive nature. When the Galilean peasants gathered about him with their physical and mental ills, crying out to him from faces haggard with suffer-

ing; or when he was led into the sick room and to the couch of death—his own heart breaking within him because these became his own sufferings—then it was that he seemed to rise to heights of peculiar majesty. He was so sure of God's intention soon to make amends for all the human sicknesses of earth (Isaiah 35), that he did not hesitate to tell them early and late of the heavenly power held in reserve to heal their broken bodies. Indeed, God was able to change every shortcoming in life into absolute perfection.

What was his astonishment, then, to see men and women give repeated evidences of their faith in this divine strength of which he spoke! Their desperate need became—almost in spite of their frailties, perhaps because of their endless yearning, and certainly because of Jesus' faith and encouraging words—the avenue of healing for them. And probably not a few instances of restoration from bodily ills took place under the impelling enthusiasm with which he addressed the eager crowds.

Very naturally, they began to attribute these seemingly miraculous occurrences to his own God-given powers. He tried, with infinite patience

and gentleness, to point them to God as the source of all such changes. But their insistent voices completely drowned his out. Jesus could not possibly overtake the rumors about his mystic powers, or—as happened often—the flights of imagination which led people to create "miracles" of which he himself had no knowledge whatever.

He seems greatly to have regretted this reputation as a healer which very soon became attached to his activities. He loved his people too much to refuse to show interest in any case of need, and he felt very confident that God must share his feelings of compassion in every case. Under this dual pressure, he never failed to give all possible encouragement to the persistent groups of unfortunates who clung to his skirts in the hope of possible recovery. In their superstition, they became more and more certain that healing power did issue from the look and touch and garments of this wonderfully sympathetic prophet.

Jesus' own feelings (and a remarkably clear index to his real character is thus disclosed) may be caught from a very naïve story retained in the early chapters of Mark (1:35-38). With his mind absolutely set upon doing the whole will of God (or, as we would say to-day, living up to

the purest and most unselfish motives possible), and with no thought whatever of self-glory, Jesus shrank instinctively and sadly from the publicity which was being forced upon him. He felt that the crowds were yielding to the low motives of curiosity and fleshly self-seeking, whereas his whole mission was that of arousing in them the most exalted yearnings after the higher life. He fled from their flattery, after hours of sleepless anxiety, as one who was thrusting an emissary of Satan from his presence. Stealing away to the hills in the early morning hours, he there struggled with his bitter disappointment until the unappreciative disciples came to urge him back to another day of healing and popularity. He bluntly refused to return with them and, with no little warmth, hurried them away with himself to distant villages that he might compose himself and make sure that these, his co-workers, once for all understood the true nature of his work.

He hoped against hope that his disciples and the people generally might overcome their morbid interest in things spectacular and catch his own higher emphasis upon things spiritual. But he was dealing with an untutored folk who never could rise to his heights of thought. He stood

alone in his purity of soul, a man far beyond his times and unfortunately destined to be misunderstood. No man, even among his closest friends, grasped his purpose. One wonders whether nineteen centuries have produced even a few cultured souls capable of rising to such heights of consecration.

There was another striking side to Jesus' message for the Jewish people. He found God powerful and eager to act for the common good; but he also stressed the love-motive which lay at the root of all these divine purposes. Divine Power was, in the last analysis, Love seeking its own. It was Love in action to redeem and to safeguard the deepest interests of these several millions of Jewish people scattered throughout the nations, and through these chosen servants to make the whole earth a place of bliss for all.

Of course, the modern mind can see in this pure God-ideal of Jesus the exalted nature of his own spirit. It was really Jesus who built, upon the basis of a splendid Jewish tradition, but more especially from his own kindly interest in his people and the world, this picture of the Perfect One enthroned in the praises of all earnest souls

like his own. A man's God-conception is one of the best indexes to his own character. In a sense, his God is the ideal self which he holds before himself as a standard which he seeks to realize—which he slights at great cost to his inner well-being.

In his opening address at Nazareth above referred to (Luke 4: 16-22[a]), after the momentous decision had been made to assume the joys and burdens of a prophet's career, Jesus had sounded the note of God's unfailing love, particularly for the needy and the forsaken among the people. From the beginning, he had conceived it his supreme mission to broadcast this happy news of God's love through word and act of his own. And if ever a life upon earth has demonstrated this love-ideal through daily and hourly interest in all that concerns human welfare, certainly Jesus' brief but crowded days were its supreme demonstration. The love-motive, practical every-day concern for the betterment of mankind, then, was the dominating note in his life. And it is the slowly spreading knowledge of this fundamental characteristic in his nature that is doing more than all else to lead the world of to-day toward

that ultimate goal which all acknowledge to be so desirable.

It was the constant reiteration of this ever-present love of God which drew the peasant multitudes to his side and gave them new confidence in their right to dream dreams of national greatness. This also gave them assurance that Someone cared, and desired to share their most intimate sorrows and their coming joys. No wonder they regarded this as new teaching! It had been theory in their lives, as taught by the average parent and scribe. Jesus made it real through a life committed to a program of simple love.

Every time Jesus visited a sick-room, or sought to cheer a roadside leper, every time he ministered to an unbalanced Magdalene, or drew a Zaccheus back into higher levels of business, it was love—the conscious love of God—surging up within him, leading him gloriously on. To carry out this convincing and converting love-program of his heavenly Father, he spent his full strength from day to day. These were not the physical burdens of the carpenter-shop to which he was now giving himself, but the heavier tasks which wear upon the human soul. For he made every

man's sorrows his own, and so was successful in meeting the hidden needs of many.

When men and women brought their secret sins to lay them down at the feet of this Stranger-Friend, the great human confessional which all men of all time have so much needed was set up without pomp or display. Burdened souls turned as naturally to Jesus as a son to his mother; here they found absolute confidence and an opportunity to face honestly their worst selves. Here also they found the noble ideals of which they may have dreamed, but which had hitherto eluded them because they lacked power to be what they knew they should become. Jesus stirred up this power within them, for he carried within his quiet life the mystic sources of rejuvenation which so few know how to obtain or develop.

It is sometimes said that Jesus presented no new truths to the world, that many prophets and scribes had already said everything that he uttered, and in equally concise fashion. Even supposing that this were true, yet where is the teacher who has gripped men's lives with the commonplaces of religion as Jesus succeeded in doing? And who of these many teachers has so convinced men that their lives must ever stand strongly back

of their words; that their character must speak even more effectively than their thinking and their preaching?

It was not so much what Jesus said, but rather the kindly, interested way in which he said it, that made all the difference between casual listeners and the conscience-stricken followers who hung upon his lips as if for their very lives. It was Jesus' overwhelming conviction, his passionate humanness, and his keen practicality that compelled his hearers to heed and remember his sound advice. *Jesus himself was new*—different from other teachers of his day. His Galilean friends caught his spirit even more than the meaning of his parables; and God was born again in their lives thereby. Nothing but warm and constant human love could make this divine passion real to men. Jesus had this happy faculty to an unusual degree.

He had been thrown into most intimate relations with both the members of the large family in which he was brought up (Mark 6:3), and the many townsmen whose trusted carpenter he had been during the past twenty long years. His public utterances reveal a rare power of insight into the ways and needs of the common people. It requires years of exercise to develop

such powers of reaching human hearts as Jesus disclosed from the very beginning of his ministry. And because he knew human ways, because he felt instinctively the longings and disappointments, the joys and ambitions, written in the faces of the crowds that daily pressed about him for a satisfying gospel, he had absolute confidence that God must, in even higher degree, know all of the thoughts and capabilities of mankind.

For these many humble folk to know that, at last, somebody understood them, and to receive assurance that the heavenly Father was not—in spite of all the ills to which their people had been subjected—forgetful of them and their needs, seems to have made a very deep impression upon them. It was this gospel of divine love which, shortly after Jesus' untimely death, swept multitudes of oppressed peoples of many varied languages and types of training into his following. And probably throughout the entire nineteen centuries of Christian development, no one factor has wrought so mightily as this love-message borne by the appealing life of the Nazarene carpenter.

For, in all ages and among all peoples, the deepest and most persistent human cry is that for

a comprehending and responsive love. Jesus voiced the most fundamental need of the ages. Men read real love in his face and his ministry. They felt that they had touched the eternal kindness of God in a true friend, one of their own number.

Jesus' quiet confidence in God's provision for every need of His human family led many an anxious soul to throw aside corroding care and find new hope in common daily tasks. Why, indeed, should they be anxious over the petty concerns which, after all, were all caught up in the great current of divine destiny? Assured of this one great reality—that God did understand, did care, even for the least of them—these simple Galileans learned through his gracious example to see all life's minutiæ in the light of this one consoling truth, and were content, as he was.

When Jesus was one day asked by a discerning scribe to name the basal truth of all religion, he promptly recalled the beautiful prayer which both of them had uttered many, many times from earliest boyhood days (Mark 12:28-34). Perhaps, without realizing it for many years, both men had been growing in comprehension of the deepest truth which man can ever know: that *Love* is the

key to all appreciation of life, and the only door to the ultimate peace and fulness of being.

To Jesus, it was as natural to reach out to God with responsive love as to breathe and eat and sleep. The fact that he regarded it as the first rule of life to be grateful and to have perfect confidence in the Father above, meant that he considered God as being so wonderfully kind that every thoughtful person must instinctively arrive at the same conclusion.

Jesus had looked up into the face of his father Joseph all during the days of his youth, and by degrees had learned the rich meaning in a father's toil for his children, in a father's protecting arms, and a father's wise provision against possible want and harm. So also he read love into the powers of his own body and mind, and into the social relations which he enjoyed in the little village of Nazareth. In his happy labor as a carpenter, and in his ability to make people's burdens lighter when they turned to him and his calm faith in God as their best solace in sorrow, his own capacity for love grew apace. Man's will to see opportunity in life's common things, and human eagerness to co-operate with every outreaching force in life, constituted for him the connection

between man's pressing need and the bountiful provision of an all-wise and ever-thoughtful Father and Provider.

To enjoy this supreme relationship, to experience this unshakable confidence, and to find that each day's succeeding tasks lifted him into ever greater certainty and satisfaction, were to him as if the Kingdom of God were already come. Whenever that final event should come to pass, it need hold no surprises for one who had lived with God, loved God, worked with God, through the long preparatory years.

Love made all things worthwhile. Love kept one's heart from growing faint. Love took the sting out of sorrow and disappointment. And love made one feel at home in every other human life; indeed, in all the world—for GOD *was Love!* Here, and here alone, lay the secret of being, and the source of unfailing power.

CHAPTER V

PROPHET OF HUMANITY

CENTURIES of cumulative Christian tradition have played havoc with the original convictions of Jesus. His thought and his habits of working and living have become thoroughly conventionalized, as generations of monks and priests and evangelists have come to imagine that their own beliefs and forms of worship must have been his. Hence a comparison of much that is in the later portions of the gospels—not to say very much that is known under the name of "modern Christianity" —with the simpler and earlier sources upon which historians have long since learned to rely for their approach to the facts in Jesus' life, gives one a distinct shock of surprise.

The Jesus of our church forms and creeds is made to dispense rewards and punishments; to require ritualistic observances and confessions; to demand divine homage and complicated theological beliefs, as the *sine qua non* of a brand new, heaven-sent religion, apart from which man may

expect nothing but certain and everlasting judgment. Such a Jesus is so far from the thought-moulds of his time, and so directly in contrast to his own plain teaching, that one wonders how the Christian world could allow itself to be so utterly misled all these years!

And the greater pity still is this, that although scientific and reverent scholarship has, for decades now, made the plain facts available for the world, yet the masses of Jesus' followers are uninformed as to the real situation. Indeed, many leaders of Christian thought persistently refuse to look at the facts that they and their people may not be "unduly disturbed" in their complacent and too well "authenticated" worship of tradition.

Jesus was brought up in the strict Pharisaic sect of Judaism. Five hundred years of separatistic and binding tradition lay heavily upon his Jewish people. Probably most of them carried on uncomplainingly, accepting "the will of the Lord" as a matter of course. Layer upon layer of scribal interpretation of this supposed will of the Lord had gradually taken the place of first-hand touch with religious reality. It is this conflict of ideals which has, from time immemorial, been the true bone of contention between the prophet on the

one side, and the priest and scribe on the other. The average Jew of Jesus' day, like most people in most religions, followed the traditions of the time quite obediently. Seldom was he disillusioned in the faith that conformity to scriptural and scribal injunctions, plus membership in a race peculiarly designated by God for salvation and eternal bliss, was the only guarantee he needed to be considered "right" in the eyes of God and men.

The fact was that the great prophets of Israel, for centuries, had thundered their anathemas at the ritualistic guides of their people. They had exacted the sternest ethical requirements of the Jewish people—a change of heart, in place of the dead and ineffective mummery of shrine and temple. But these facts were not "allowed to disturb the thinking of the masses." Could not endless quotations from the sacred scriptures and from the scribes be poured forth every Sabbath to encourage the blind worshippers in their calm assurance? Had not the very writings of the prophets themselves been changed? Thanks to very slight emendations of the text, they sounded no longer so scathingly denunciatory of these par-

ticular observances and teachings that were, from Sabbath to Sabbath, being held before the congregations of the faithful as the full will of God. After generations of such scribal adjustments had been added, however, these same fiery spokesmen for God were *made to say the very opposite* of that truth which they had held vital for the life and safety of their beloved people. Thus easily was "scripture made safe" for orthodoxy!

Jesus came into public life at such a traditional period in the life of his nation. Having passed through an overwhelming experience of revulsion toward the popular Judaism of his day, and having found such intensely joyous certainty in the fellowship of the prophets, he was bound to be looked upon as an innovator and a disturber of the public welfare. How could he cling to the prophets and their fine sense of the immediacy of the revelations of God in the heart of man, and at the same time keep step with the obstructionist leaders of Israel? How could he speak out the truth with which he believed God had filled his soul, and yet expect mercy and understanding at the hands of those who were set for the defense of the "sacred traditions"? No wonder real

prophets were few and far between; that the voice of inner authority was seldom heard in market-place and synagogue!

The Day of Tradition—whatever the religion—is seldom a time of progressive enlightenment; for the hand of man is notably repressive, and his spirit is impatient at the rise of that which seems to overturn the experience of years. What hope of a fair hearing, then, had the two young men, John and Jesus? For they were evidently impelled by an inner, consuming passion for God and truth, and heroic enough to care not a whit upon whose shoulders the lash of that compelling truth might fall.

Now begins the brief and tumultuous story of the tragedy which Jesus chose to face when he set himself like flint to "please God." He was exchanging the quiet home and carpenter shop for the pulpit of the market-place, the seashore and the hills of Galilee, with all the relentless publicity which goes with fearless preaching of the ever new and living truth.

The gospel of Mark (2: 13) suggests that Jesus and the scribes first came into conflict over the question of the right of the new Teacher to forgive sins. But this story must be accepted with

caution, for it is quite certainly impregnated with the theological ideas of the Church, some years after the great leader's death. Evidently the succeeding verses, 6-10, should be treated as a later addition to the simple story of healing. And certainly the idea that Jesus claimed to be a supernatural Son of Man (i.e., a heavenly Messiah), with absolute authority to act for God in absolving men from their sins, as well as the consequent surprise of the scribes that any man should assume such a divine prerogative, must be put down as a reflection of that post-crucifixion period when such claims were actually advanced by Christian leaders, and were bitterly assailed by the orthodox defenders of "pure Judaism." For many reasons will appear, in the course of our study, to show that Jesus sternly rejected the Christ-title as savoring of political self-seeking, and that only the later Church ever dreamed of confusing him with the Son of Man whom both he and John expected to come from glory for the redemption of the Jewish nation.

This leaves a very simple story before us, if we may reasonably accept the suggestion above presented. Jesus was here assuring the crippled suppliant, as was his custom on all such occasions,

that God both could and would restore his powers of body if he cleansed his inner life of all evil and then exerted his utmost strength to realize his God-given powers. The scribes may well have been startled to hear a Galilean peasant utter such bold words. For only the Jewish officials of sacred rank were supposed to speak with authority upon so vital a matter; and that, usually, only after fitting marks of contrition and rites of purification had been observed in public.

Jesus, however, felt so certain that God must have the same sympathy that welled up in his own heart of tenderness, that he took his position without thought of anything except his central message—the love of God, and His eagerness to bring all men into closest fellowship with Himself. And others, as in this instance, seemed to catch the same spirit of confident conviction. For Jesus spoke with tremendous assurance on such matters as had to do with the deepest concerns of mankind. His friendliness and confidence in human worth simply swept aside all ritualistic and theological barriers supposed to exist between man and God, and he obeyed his inner impulses as the very voice of Heaven. Here again he stood with the prophets, and showed his utter

disgust for the harsh and unbrotherly traditions of the scribes.

A second clash between Jesus' humanitarianism and the conventional views of the Pharisaic leaders is reported in connection with the adoption of a tax-gatherer into his little band of intimate disciples (Mark 2: 13-17). Whatever the previous acquaintance the Teacher and the customs-house official had enjoyed, or the conversation which led up to the invitation extended to Levi-Matthew, Jesus' action certainly must have come as a surprise to others than the leaders of Jewish orthodoxy. Even the other disciples must have stared in amazement at this evidence of Jesus' liberality. Publicans were notoriously addicted to graft and bribery and, seemingly worst of all, were regarded as traitors to the Jewish cause in that they were in the business of collecting taxes from the Jewish people to help support the hated rule of the Roman in the land.

One wonders whether even the four older disciples did not lift their eyebrows when, at a feast furnished by Levi in his own home, there were invited as guests not a few others who, for one reason or another, were regarded as outside the pale of respectable Jewish society. Jesus, for his

part, believed that he saw good in every man and woman of them. He treated them as full equals and wholly worthy of the standing they should have enjoyed. Bitter indeed, therefore, was his retort when he heard that his ever-watchful scribal critics were heaping scorn upon him for daring to associate with such "low types" of people.

After the fashion of John the Baptist, he told the scribes very bluntly that in spite of their proud self-satisfaction they really needed the attentions of a spiritual physician much more than did the men they despised. They were wretchedly ill but did not realize it. He was utterly disgusted with them and their hollow pretensions. Henceforth he counted it an honor to give his full time to these unfortunate folk who knew their need and openly confessed the fact.

As little might we expect an Amos to placate the priests of Bethel, and receive consideration at their hands, as to think of Jesus attempting to find common ground with the accepted leaders of Israel whom he so thoroughly despised for their formality and hypocrisy. Henceforth the chasm widened with every meeting of the two; and Jesus seems to have done nothing to soften the

bitterness engendered. His prophetic spirit drove him on to further clashes and deeper hostility. This was his mission, heaven-designed, and his courage rose to each new occasion with increasing determination and enthusiasm.

Again Jesus exposed himself to the dual criticism of the Pharisees and of John's disciples because of his abandonment of the two set fast days of the week (Mark 2: 18-19). It seems somewhat strange that he would venture so far from the strong traditions of the time, and particularly from a custom so strenuously advocated by his Master. But even John's influence could not keep him from following his maturing convictions. He was convinced that plain human need must always transcend religious forms, and so must be given supreme emphasis. He was equally sure that no time must be wasted in getting the Jewish nation ready for their King's imminent coming. As ethical improvement was a matter of slow development, and as many men, especially those controlled by the pursuit of wealth, were obdurate and not at all interested in a future which might place them at a distinct economic disadvantage, it behooved Jesus and his disciples to

turn every golden moment to account lest some of the people be not ready when the Day of Judgment was ushered in.

The startling answer which Jesus gave to John's inquiring disciples was couched in the kindest of language, but it evidently impressed them as a final statement of his position and calling for no further discussion. For, said he, "We are preparing for a great festal wedding day, a day of supreme happiness. How, then, can we honestly pretend that our hearts are sad?"

On another occasion, probably, he is said to have replied, even more drastically, to a similar criticism (Mark 2:21-22[a]): "Can't you see how outworn and useless the old fasting customs really are? God requires of us a new and living faith which has nothing whatever in common with the perfunctory fastings of a dying age. How can we give up the joy of our mission just to observe a dead tradition? The old and the new ways of expressing our faith are utterly at variance. Tradition kills the spirit of human interest, and in God's eyes this is the one principle of supreme value."

The Jewish traditions were particularly severe with regard to the observance of the holy Sab-

bath day. For hundreds of years the hours from Friday at sunset until Saturday at the same hour had been scrupulously set apart as sacred to God. A strange tradition had gradually come to have binding force, namely, that God had set apart these very moments, to be forever kept as a mark of especial loyalty to himself. The late story of creation (Genesis 1), in which this doctrine was embedded, was given first place in Jewish scriptures (*cir.* 500 B.C.), and gradually the idea assumed a cardinal position among the ritual requirements of the synagogue.

For Jesus to depart one iota from such a highly specialized belief was to set himself hopelessly at variance with that strong group of leaders which had been trained for generations to defend this custom. But Jesus, hewing without flinching to the clear humanitarian line which he had chosen, felt very earnestly that this Sabbath-observance oftentimes was allowed to conflict with the needs of the sick and the plain health-requirements of the body. Doubtless he knew, as Jews and Christians of even recent generations have known, that in spite of the liberal concessions of certain leaders, the strict observance of this holy day was too often an excuse for harshly inhuman inter-

pretations of the law and led directly or indirectly to the injury of the health.

In any case, a bitter controversy arose one Sabbath day over such a trivial matter as that of picking wheat from the fields, rubbing it between the hands, and eating it with hungry appreciation (Mark 2:23-27[a]). Anyone who has noticed the horror of ultra-conservative people in modern Jewish or Christian circles when some simple infraction of the strict Sabbath rule has inadvertently taken place, can understand the cause of the rupture between Jesus and the disciples, on the one hand, and the watchful defenders of the faith, on the other.

Jesus' rather naïve defense of himself and his men, in using well-known scripture passages (I Samuel 21:6, Numbers 28:9, 10, and Hosea 6:6), was not calculated to allay the scruples of his Pharisaic opponents. It was, in fact, a keen thrust, in Jesus' usual direct fashion, at the principle involved in the question. If precedent was to dictate custom, perhaps his critics had let slip one or two passages which justified Jesus in his freer action. Of course the Pharisees insisted upon clinging to the conventional writings which gave Heaven's final dictum, apparently in plain oppo-

sition to Jesus' attitude; and the war was on more strenuously than ever.

Here was a man who flouted the sternest and most vital ordinance ever issued by almighty God! And then to think that he laughed in the faces of those who sought to uphold the law accepted by ages of reputable scribes! Furthermore, he was publicly advocating such radical ideas, and leading the simple Galileans to follow his reckless and godless example! Jesus lost caste rapidly, after this open rupture, although many of the common people seem covertly to have had sufficient sense of humor to admire him for his courage and his practical sense.

When, on another Sabbath, Jesus openly encouraged a man with a paralyzed hand to attempt to use it, and the man succeeded in regaining the use of the supposedly dead member, the Pharisaic group—fearing the popular effect of this apparent miracle—went to the extreme of making accusations against Jesus before the Herodian officials. Supposedly they attacked the Prophet, not as a Sabbath-breaker (for the non-Jewish police would have laughed at such a ridiculous charge), but as a dangerous man, actually plotting in secret to overthrow the Herodian-

Roman régime for his own selfish purposes (Mark 3: 1-6)!

Now nothing was further from Jesus' thought than the ambition to become a petty king of the Jewish people. And in this accusation he recognized the fine hand of the same Jerusalem clique that had so efficiently disposed of John the Baptist on precisely the same grounds. He knew that they would resort to any possible means, fair or foul, to get rid of him. Learning his lesson from John's unfortunate experience, therefore, and probably being warned by friends at court to escape while he could, Jesus discreetly withdrew northward into Gentile territory—at first alone, and perhaps some weeks later, in company with his puzzled but ever faithful band of personal followers.

Here, driven by the stern hand of necessity, and not knowing how long he might be spared to further instruct these few men upon whom he staked all the future of his cause, he now proceeded once again to inculcate upon them, with a passionate earnestness which they could never forget, the few simple principles which he regarded as so important for the development of their own character, and so essential for the fu-

ture conduct of their mission in Galilee. He warned them very frankly of the dangers to which they exposed themselves in associating with him in this work, but he sought, as never before, to make them realize how much of the future well-being of the world was dependent upon their courage in this critical juncture. Nor, probably as at other times, did he forget to remind them of the joys which awaited them if their labors should eventually be crowned with success (Cf. Luke 6: 20-49).

When this immediate storm appeared to have passed over, Jesus and his Twelve returned quietly to the upper lake region and once more he attempted to carry on those public addresses and the many quiet personal talks and ministrations which made him the most far-famed and beloved leader that Galilee had ever known. Increasing multitudes hung upon his every word, and more and more cases of illness were referred to him, if perchance some mystic influence might emanate from his sympathetic look or touch to effect the healing for which so many most fervently prayed.

Occasionally an insane person would recover balance and be returned to society through the powerful and friendly influence of this strong

young man (Mark 1:21-27[a]; 5:1-6, 18-19; Luke 8:1-2). On at least one occasion (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43), he seems to have aroused the latent powers of a little girl who had been given up as dead. Others claimed restoration of normal bodily functions through touch with his clothes (Mark 5:25-34), or encouraged by his simple faith in the victorious power of God to make all things right with his people, whether matters of body or of spirit (Mark 7:32-37; 8:22-26).

How much these stories have departed from the simple facts of the original events, we may never know. It is always wise to allow for the growth of tradition. But two things are quite clear: first of all, that the energizing personality of this confident and enthusiastic prophet might very easily stimulate, then as now, the undeveloped powers of many sorts of diseased folk, aiding them in recovering their powers of body and mind. In the second place, during all of this kindly work, Jesus seems never to have assumed these powers as his own. Never (according to our early documents, as we have seen) does he claim to possess unusual—not to say divine—ability or prerogatives. With marvelous balance, he always kept GOD'S power and love in the foreground. He

himself was merely acting as the Herald of better days, and the earnest Spokesman called in an exigency to further God's beneficent plans for the world. Thus he carried on his strenuous work from day to day, his sleep often interrupted by the eager and thoughtless crowd, or by the needs of the disciple group. Everybody knew him as "the man who went everywhere doing good," and "the friend of all whom others despised and cast out from high society."

Jesus will never be appreciated until these two characteristics of his personality are given due consideration. His was preëminently a mission of love. His Jewish people were as the apple of his eye. Their welfare was his one supreme passion. Never did man spend two more strenuous years in seeking to ameliorate the sufferings of all who sought his help. Here was a heart of unlimited compassion, a nature easily approachable, one who kept religion beautifully simple, pure, and all-commanding. Tender as a mother, as deeply concerned as a father, he was friend to all who sought truth in sincerity.

But Jesus has been misunderstood with regard to another side of his life. With all his tenderness, and his gracious desire to be one with his

fellow-men, he could stand like adamant and fight back heroically whenever moral principle was involved. He was ever the prophet, with a prophet's passionate love for truth. He was no whit less vehement than Amos or John the Baptist. More refined than either of these worthies, and far more human because of his intimate knowledge of the daily round of human needs, he yet kept alive that insistent passion for progress which has given him his rightful place in the front rank of the religious leaders of history.

CHAPTER VI

PROPHET OF CONTAGIOUS JOY

THE Christian portion of the Græco-Roman world was called upon, for the first three centuries of its history, to pass through such terrible struggles, such intense suffering of both body and mind, that it very naturally found inspiration and solace in the story of Jesus' courageous battle for human welfare and of his brave death for his religious convictions. Having little opportunity for the enjoyment of the happier side of life, Christian teaching tended to emphasize the sad and sacrificial side of Jesus' career. From early days, he was presented to Christian circles as the suffering Savior of men. Multitudes of converts were won to the cause through faith in this "dying and rising Savior" who came from glory to win salvation for mankind through this supreme sacrificial act.

Long after the Christian people were relieved from persecution at the hands of Roman officials (311 A.D.), and even after the Church came to

occupy a dominating position in the Empire, the church leaders continued to present Jesus to old and young as the sad-faced, thorn-crowned Redeemer. The gospels had been written very largely under this conception of him, and as these documents were the chief text-book of the Church, the same impressions were carried from generation to generation with little thought that there was a happier side to Jesus' life and teaching.

Only during the last few decades, in fact, has scholarship brought back to light this more charming feature of his experience. Without this broader perspective, however, one can hardly say that he really knows Jesus as he was. The majority of Christians over the modern world may still be said to be under the influence of impressions reflecting the sad and heavy theological thought of ancient and exceedingly bitter days.

In spite of the unhappy background of Jesus' early career as a disciple of John, one may easily feel the tremendous urge of the happy vision which possessed his soul as he stepped loyally forward to carry on John's important work. It was Jesus' buoyant, reassuring news of happier days to come; it was the fresh and unaccustomed thrill in his voice, the cheering graciousness of his speech,

and the pure look of joy in his face, that won people to give him a hearing in those first crucial days after his return to Galilee (Luke 4:22). The word "gospel" (happy news!) is the great slogan associated with Jesus' name from first to last of those two momentous years (Mark 1:15; Luke 4:18, 21).

He was happy, indeed, if he was able to make his Jewish people catch the fiery fervor of his own conviction regarding the glorious Day so near at hand. He was so anxious to turn their thoughts away from Roman injustice and hatred of the foreign yoke to that of God's sure deliverance; to make them feel the thrill of release from their little selfish sins and arouse them to consciousness of their oneness with God's purposes for the greater race. To teach them more faith in one another and in their own powers of body and spirit; to open eyes blinded by ignorance and prejudice so that they might truly see, for the first time, how great a life of happy service lay before them—and to do all this out of sheer love for God and his people—this was Jesus' highest joy.

His public preaching must have been a further cause of great happiness to him. These untutored folk needed him and his message. They

crowded around him day after day because they were frank enough to acknowledge their dependence upon such a gospel of hope and of relief from their sins and from their daily burdens. To look into the faces of these earnest people and realize that many of them were actually growing in godlikeness, in humanness, was pure uplift of spirit to Jesus.

But his most significant work, we may well be persuaded, was done in the quiet of personal conversation. Here nothing intervened between his appealing life and the crying emptiness and passionate yearning of the man or the woman who, for the first time, gazed into the depths of human possibilities. For Jesus' personality must have come home to these fellow-Galileans as a very refreshing surprise. Quite certainly, they had never seen his like before. Such characters were found alone in the sacred books of old. And, above all, he was so natural, so vivacious, so compelling, in the simple charm of his ways. They could not resist him, if their hearts were pure, even where they differed from him. The "hopeless outcasts," in particular, felt drawn by the sheer unselfishness and unaffected joyousness of his nature.

There were only two types of people who could

not feel thus attracted to Jesus, and therefore remained untouched by his stirring message. These were the theologically hardened and the wealth-surfeited natures whose every interest was so absorbed in the trivialities of existence that they could no longer respond to those primal urges of the soul with which Jesus' whole being was so grandly imbued. With these two groups he necessarily clashed again and again. They pitied him, for they were too small of nature to grasp the significance of such a unique personality. Long after they were forgotten of posterity, was his name to be mentioned with gratitude on the part of millions of every tongue and nation. But they had no conception whatever of his possible rank in history. On the other hand, he grieved over them; he prayed for them. He tried his best to win them to something more human—and, failing in this, he pointed them out many times to his followers as the most hopeless of all classes of men.

When Jesus succeeded in winning his first four disciples from among the hardy, happy fishermen of Lake Galilee, they joined him largely because they liked his frank, free and charming way of laying his program before them. His personality

captivated them. They liked his enthusiasm, his boundless faith in his work, and his cheerful conception of religion. Never would these men have left their nets and the assured comforts of home and family for a sad-faced misanthrope. His note was positive, his voice rang with eagerness, he saw fate in the large, he made men's lives noble and responsive because his was an optimism fed at eternal springs. These men never forsook him in their heart of hearts, although unforeseen circumstances once or twice caught them off their guard. They joked with him; he called them by playful or appreciative nicknames; and they were his intimate companions, sharing all his thoughts and plans quite freely. Nor did they stand particularly in awe of him, except at those rare and perplexing moments when his thinking was as high as heaven above their own—times when he seemed to see with history, while their minds were absorbed with the moment's gain or loss.

Jesus was a man of many moods, as such an exceedingly sensitive nature must always be. There was dramatic power in his glance; a world of meaning in the vigor or the reserve with which he made his unconscious gestures. The fire in his

eye, the color which often mounted to cheek and forehead, bespoke the depths of his feelings. His nature ran the gamut of human emotions, from heartbreaking agony to the heights of purest joy. Such a character must have had in it a great deal of room for the humorous, the happy, strains of life.

What a ring of joy there is in those two old-fashioned pictures which he draws of the two kinds of religion out of which his own experience had sprung. The one: effete, formal, incapable of feeding growing spirits, incapable itself of expansion, or of romance, and therefore furnishing no alluring vision such as appeals to youthful, vigorous natures. The other: vital, ever changing, and not afraid to vary as experience points the way forward; leaving one that freedom which every awakened soul requires to work out its full destiny. (See Mark 2:21, 22[b].)

Jesus had been compelled, by the high requirements of a sensitive conscience, to leave "the good old religion" of form and human authority. Painfully, and probably over years of earnest thought, he had built up a faith which was his very own. It was a faith that made him fairly shout for joy; one that made him wish that every-

body might share his happiness with him, for he could believe in it with all his ardent soul. To stifle this happy outburst of his inmost life, even to please those who were set in authority for the spiritual guidance of the nation, were to die of suffocation; to do despite to the holiest truth of God. New! New, and satisfying! The wine of real life, at last! This was Jesus' new-found faith. And even the deep shadow of a Roman cross, and the doom of almost certain oblivion, could not turn him from his fateful course.

His quotation from the words of Hosea (6:6) mentioned above, and his sturdy defense of the happy uses of the Sabbath day, are notable instances showing how strongly he felt the need of keeping religion forever free from the dead hand of tradition. His untiring insistence that one must render happy service every day in the week, and live for the joy of doing good (in particular upon that day of days which had become hallowed by association with the search for the mind of God)—this was the keynote of the living faith which he bequeathed to the world.

Many a trenchant illustration of this irrepressible gospel is found in those portions of the Sayings of Jesus which have won for themselves the

most deserving popularity, in all ages. In the famous hillside talk which later times honored as the "Sermon on the Mount," his eloquence, his magnetic earnestness, and his thrilling passion for the welfare of his Palestinian friends registered a most telling victory. Could Moses himself speak with greater unction? Would that the whole world might have heard those words of grace, for God must have given especial power to his speech that day. The little group of particular friends and disciples could never again be the same after such a clear statement of religious principles.

This was no funeral oration for the comfort of future martyrs of the yet unborn Church, as many a Christian leader has fondly believed, quite mistaking the thought of Jesus, and forgetting the purpose of the gathering that never-to-be-forgotten day. Quite to the contrary, Jesus was arousing this little group of friendly souls from the traditional acquiescence of ages, as it had been represented in the Judaism which they knew and before which they bowed in thoughtless silence and awe.

Nor was Jesus using this opportunity to impress either these unprepared folk, or some mystic world of the future, with his own unspeakable

authority over Moses, the veteran leader of ancient Israel. Farthest from his heart's wish was any such sort of rivalry. Only a jealous and short-sighted tradition built up by later well-meaning followers could place him in that light. He was perfectly capable of proclaiming his own convictions, and he trusted both the truth so declared, and the minds of men to welcome that truth when it was fairly placed before them.

Here, certainly, was no mock king pompously declaring the will of Heaven with majestic finality, as so many have unfortunately supposed. Rather is this friendly monitor of men's consciences appealing to trusted pupils in his newly founded school of practical religion for aggressive expression of all that is best in their experience and his. The stirring vivacity of his look and the undeniable ring of challenging adventure in his voice could not possibly escape these alert folk who, for the first time in their monotonous lives were listening to one who opened their hearts and their unrealized powers before their minds' eyes. In his burning analysis of social and moral conditions in Palestine they saw their duty made plain for years to come. In his good cheer and courage they found their own faith in men and ideals

made strong. (Cf. Luke 6: 12-23 with the later and more formal rendering of Matthew 5: 1—7: 29.)

The plain fact is that Jesus is seeking to bind eight newly chosen disciples and the four older ones to his cause by assuring them repeatedly that they are embarking with him upon the happiest mission which ever had called forth the energies of men. Although they may be called upon from time to time to face hardships, due to the natural opposition of the conventional scribes, yet the present and the future compensations for their work are out of all proportion to the trying ordeals through which they must pass. He even insists that they must greet, "with shouts of glee and with ecstatic leaps of joy," all such tests of endurance because of the greatness of their cause. And, finally, he warns them that they must be ready to bear the most stinging insults with such godlike patience that their opponents may even be won over by their gracious bearing. Above all things, they must be faithful and firm until the object of their hopes—the coming of the Son of Man to set up his Kingdom on earth—is fully realized.

That the imagination of these twelve men was

forever captured by Jesus' confident tone, eager looks, and glowing picture of the better world to be, is clearly proved when one remembers how faithfully they stayed by him, except for one brief moment of misunderstanding at the close of his career. Even Judas' momentary defection cannot offset the happy loyalty of the Eleven who, for many years after Jesus' death, continued to bear the brunt of the work left upon their unprepared shoulders.

Both in this impressive address to the Twelve, and in the earlier appeal to the Four (Mark 1: 17-20), one thing which drove his thought home to the hearts of these men was the fact that Jesus himself was so carried away with the new work for which he had given up all his past career as a carpenter. He had burned all his bridges behind him. He was taking his life in his hands. He was daring all for the greatest future any Jew could possibly imagine. They liked his wholeheartedness.

We must remember that probably most of these twelve men were either openly or secretly in sympathy with the Zealot antipathy toward Rome, as many later incidents will demonstrate. And some think that they may have belonged to that ex-

treme loyalist movement which sought to establish a Jewish State by force of arms. Of course, they were inspired by the traditional hope aroused by the prophets and apocalyptists, that God would recognize their fiery earnestness and bless their efforts accordingly. But a knowledge of this interest may help us understand the further reason why they welcomed Jesus' appeal so heartily.

His joy and enthusiasm were just the signs of leadership for which they had been waiting. The wonder is that the Zealots did not rush in upon him and sweep him off his feet. In six months' time he could easily have carried Palestine by revolution, as was done in 66-73 A.D., and again (under Bar-Cochba) in 132-135 A.D. At times, there must have been an irresistible and captivating fierceness in Jesus' public speech, to win such a following as these sturdy men gave him.

In several detached sayings found in the gospel of Matthew and bearing the marks of historicity, there is still further evidence that Jesus' speeches were characterized by tense vigor, exalted feeling, and poetic uplift. The so-called "Lord's Prayer" (Matthew 6:9-13. Cf. Luke 11:2-4) is a case in point. For here, with remarkable reserve and yet

with the hush of repressed excitement so evident, Jesus is baring his inmost soul to his bosom friends. He is telling them how he keeps alive his sense of the presence of God, and what it means to him in the way of inspiration and encouragement. Anyone who attempts to repeat these words of vital experience in a perfunctory, monotonous, ritualistic spirit, entirely misses his explanation. (See also Matthew 5: 16, 17, 20, 41, 43-45, and 6: 3-6, 16-18.)

Jesus' business life had been so evidently successful, from an ethical point of view, his relations with his fellowmen so satisfactory, and his confidence in God and in the ultimate welfare of the world so absolutely (shall we say, so naïvely?) perfect, that it seemed to him the height of sinfulness to distrust the kindly providence of Heaven. For a man to be grasping and selfish in business, in so far that he made it his life's aim to satisfy himself with only those material comforts which minister to the physical nature, seemed to Jesus quite unworthy of a humanity set for eternal destinies. On the other hand, it seemed so distrustful, so pathetically peevish, for one to allow the cancer of worry to eat away his life in secret. When God had so much to offer in

return for man's fair expenditure of energy, what right had he to use up his sacred powers in cowardly anxiety? (Luke 12: 22-34.)

With what sheer joy did Jesus, when urging his simple Galilean friends to throw their whole beings into a spirit of co-operation with God, dilate upon the multitudinous reasons for a life of untroubled trust. Life appeared to yield so many evidences of God's care and goodness, that Jesus' great out-of-door nature responded almost with childish glee. How happy the whole world would be, he would say, if only it could learn to cultivate the gospel of serviceable work and hearty gratitude! Concentration upon the nobler interests of life, therefore, would be an absolute guarantee against all of the inroads of petty human care.

With what a hearty emphasis, too, Jesus pictures the eagerness of God to share his best possessions with every one of his great human family. May we not have here a glimpse of the long, happy days which Jesus and his many brothers and sisters (Mark 6: 3) enjoyed under the parental guidance of Joseph and Mary? In the goodness and thoughtfulness of Joseph he finds his satisfying picture of God, the Father above. In

his intimate work and talks with his father at the work-bench in the little village carpenter-shop, he discovers the nearness and sleepless interest of the perfect Father who presides over all human destinies.

And even when the pall of death fell upon the little Nazareth cottage, and the beloved Father no longer stood beside him in his accustomed work-place, it was with a subdued joy that the sacred remains of the one Father were committed to the care of the Other Father for eternal keeping. No shadow of doubt was allowed to cross the path of this devoted son of Israel. In his own sense of absolute integrity, and in the joy of his own dedication to the life of helpfulness, he believed that all of God's good world of love and power must necessarily work with him and support a faith so intimately and firmly founded upon experience.

There was one theme of which Jesus never wearied of talking. His mind dwelt very much, even to the last, upon the nature and happy future of the coming Kingdom. His language suggests that he had often read, or heard quotations from, some of the Jewish apocalyptists, who sought by every means in their power to cheer their people with hopes of future deliverance.

Jesus seems not to have been carried away with the voluptuous minutiæ of their pictures. His mind was too well balanced to allow any fanciful details to sway him, or anything but stern and practical ethical principles to guide his actions. But that he did share their basal conclusions, there seems little reason to doubt.

For instance, he holds (as we have seen) that God actually did intend to set up a veritable heaven upon earth. This reign would be built around the faithful Jewish people as the chosen and honored nucleus of the redeemed earth. He seems quite convinced that a specially created Son of Man, now waiting upon the throne of Heaven for the Day of destiny to dawn, would be the active agent of this redemptive movement. All mankind would ultimately be brought into judgment before the royal presence of this supreme dignitary, to answer as to their character-qualifications and their readiness for sharing in a world of perfect justice and goodness (Matthew 25: 31-46).

Thus the gates of God's Kingdom would be wide open to all men, regardless of race or blood. There would be no suggestion whatever of particularistic creed or ritual which any group of

people (even the Jewish) might, by accident of birth or location, have inherited. This Day of Judgment would be ushered in by portents of indescribable awe and glory. The angelic hosts of heaven would accompany the Son of Man to his seat of glory in the Holy City of Jerusalem, to the utter discomfiture of all enemies of God. Their fate included banishment from the face of the earth forever. Thus far Jesus' imagination seems to have allowed him to go. What more he may have said, or thought, we shall probably never know. These few details have been preserved for us in the apparently early documents of the Christian gospels.

Out of these glowing dreams of the future earth of bliss, Jesus seems to have derived unspeakable comfort and happiness. Of the certainty of this outcome, he seems never to have harbored a doubt, however many obstacles there appeared to be in the way of God (Matthew 13:24-30). The fact that God's power was fully equal to the occasion, even where man's power availed so little, gave Jesus perfect satisfaction (Mark 4:26-29). That all the world of peoples would ultimately yield to the firm but kindly sway of the Heaven-sent Messiah—the only kind of Christ of whom John and

Jesus could possibly conceive—was held as a matter of absolute assurance (Mark 4:30-32; Matthew 13:36-43?).

Jesus seems to have made much of the joys which were held in store for all who furthered the cause of the Kingdom. Membership in this new Commonwealth——the one Brotherhood of Man—was the most desirable prize which any man might spend his life in seeking (Matthew 13:44). No other bliss of earth could for one moment compare with this, and the possession of this supreme gift of God might well call out all of man's acquisitive energies (Matthew 13:45, 46).

If any of Jesus' Jewish hearers were inclined to worry lest peoples of mixed or foreign ancestry were to be included in this Kingdom, he hastened to warn them that many a foreigner would well deserve to take precedence, if the Jews did not quickly get over their indifference to things spiritual. Then he would assure them that nothing unworthy of God's highest ideals could possibly be tolerated under the new reign, for the white fires of judgment were to render all who entered spotlessly perfect (Matthew 13:47-50).

With many such oriental pictures did Jesus

build up the hopes of his followers, adding this one emphatic note of certainty, whenever they were inclined to turn from his impractical visions to the Zealot ideal of winning Jewish independence by the sharp edge of the sword: "And be assured, men," he would say, "that this is not a fanciful dream of the distant future; for I tell you, in all solemnity, some of you who now stand here before my face shall surely live to witness this great Day of glory. I, for my part, may be called upon to sacrifice my life as part of the price of the Kingdom's installation. Nevertheless *I shall soon stand again among you,* as the clarion of judgment summons both the living and the dead before the dread bar of the Great King. Never doubt God's power to keep his sacred promises to Israel!" (See Mark 9:1; 14:25.)

How many times Jesus congratulated his audiences upon their privilege in being alive to hear the good news of the Kingdom's coming (Luke 10:23-24; 11:27-28). For his immediate followers he predicted (not without some restraint) rewards suited to their worth (Luke 12:41-44). He wished, above all else, that they should chasten

their souls as for a most severe test, lest they lose all in the hour of judgment. And he set the example by minimizing his own part in the coming glory. In fact, quite contrary to the spirit of the secondary sources of the gospels, he sincerely regarded himself as utterly unworthy to stand before the King. In his unfeigned humility he counted it his sufficient joy that others might find happiness through his efforts.[1]

In spite of the many dark shadows which cast their pall over his life, almost from the beginning of his public ministry, one may go so far as to say that, with the exception of a few critical hours when the sorrows of disappointment fairly crushed him with their cruel weight, the spirit of calm optimism and radiant joy was constantly uppermost. He knew how to forget his own griefs in the happiness of others. True, he was a man of sorrows, and he certainly drank deep draughts from the cup of grief. But we must not lose sight of the resourceful, ever grateful, and healthy disposition which gave the leading color to his life. This resourceful spirit made it pos-

[1] Contrast this early note of humility with that of exaltation which later times felt justified in placing upon his lips, as shown in Luke 22: 28-30.

sible for him so often to look up with a smile, even though it was sometimes through tears of agony.

Some thirty-five years of play and toil and happy service passed over his head before the curtain was drawn before that last fateful scene in his life. The people of his time undoubtedly knew him as one of the most charming and likeable men whom they had ever met. Fortunately this joyful element gradually came again into the foreground, after the bitter days of early Christianity were over. From that time on, men of naturally happy disposition began to see the true significance of Jesus' message, and caught the vision of the inner motive-power which rendered his example so invigorating and inspiring.

CHAPTER VII

PROPHET OF ABSOLUTE SINCERITY

If there is one moral quality above another which lies at the foundation of Jesus' whole being, it is that of *sincerity,* deep-down honesty of purpose and openness of life before God and men. Probably never in history has there been a finer illustration of honest heart-searching, of a life held steadily before the test of God's burning truth. His was a soul dominated by pure desire to be only that which the possession of exceptional powers of leadership and the crying needs of the masses demanded of him. That he responded instantly, when he felt the divine call within his soul, speaks volumes for the fineness and balance of his nature.

Whether or not the story of the Nazarene lad's visit to the Temple at the age of twelve is to be taken literally, it certainly illustrates the type of boyish purpose which later blossoms into the ripe character of a leader like Jesus. He could hardly have been the conscientious and daring prophet

we discover in him, had he not passed through many years of strenuous preparation during the otherwise quiet days of his life in the little home town.

If he had not been imbued, from early years, with a burning desire to know and to exemplify all the truth of God, we should not so often hear the words "my Father's will" falling from his lips in public speech and in private meditation. Nor would he have been drawn, as by an irresistible magnet, toward the rolls and the chastening ideals of the great Hebrew prophets. For only those of the utmost unselfishness and consuming earnestness could long stand in such company and continue to feel very much at home there.

Furthermore, the fact that he was so strongly attracted to the following of John the Baptist as to spend weeks and months under John's radical leadership points in this same direction. He even went so far as to give up all of his past business career of some twenty years, and many of his former pious habits, when called by necessity to assume John's place as head of the Galilean left wing of this Messianic movement. This also tends to reveal to one the tremendous sincerity of purpose and the iron will which gave Jesus his

unique place in the lives of his Palestinian countrymen.

How he must have admired John for his downright convictions. He rejoiced to hear a man speak in his own right, and not merely by the authority of scribal traditions repeated with more or less unctuous formality. But he was quite startled, no doubt, to hear John challenge so many of the commonly accepted teachings and rebuke, to their very faces, the reputed guides of religion fresh from the seats of power at Jerusalem. Yet had not his own soul been torn in voiceless protest against similar demonstrations of heartlessness in high places?

The time came when Jesus stood, in his own name, day after day testing his new gospel before the loving, dependent gaze of the Galilean crowds which poured out of town and hamlet to hear this new type of prophet. He was also called upon to stand long hours at a time, pilloried by the biting criticism and hate of his scribal enemies, who could not understand why he should thus expose himself and risk his reputation for so hopeless a cause. Then it was that all the God-aroused might of his new-born nature came full into view. "Never man spake like this Man!"

From his point of view, he was being questioned, not for his own sake, but for God's. It was not his self-designated mission which was called into question, but a divine calling of God's own choosing. He was not being held to public scorn for his own private opinions, but for truths which had slowly matured as under the brooding presence and care of a Holy Spirit from above. When this sacred truth became fully crystallized, and took form on his lips as the veritable Will of the Father which must be done at all costs, it was final, irrevocable, all-conquering; and yet fascinating, because it spoke of love and fatherly interest underneath all. The honor of being called to be a Spokesman for God overwhelmed Jesus. He responded with all the love and power of his great soul, thus fulfilling his childhood prayer: "*Thou* shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy might!" (Deuteronomy 6:5.)

The two versions of the Temptation Story, as told in early Christian circles (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13), give us, under strong oriental color and imagery, this one impressive fact: that, from start to finish, Jesus never once compromised with those who sought to influence him through flat-

tery. Nor could he be driven by threats, or turned a hair's breadth by popular promises of personal advantage. One thing only mastered his thoughts, the desire to please God, and to do his full duty as he was given to see it in the light of experience and the needs of the times.

How his voice rings with unmistakable sincerity, from that first memorable day when he addressed his Nazareth friends (Luke 4: 16-22[a]) upon his return from his journey to the Jordan, on to the still more momentous occasions when, in the face of the surging mobs which thronged about him in the Temple area, he pleaded and argued for the acceptance of God's ways as the only solution of his country's problems. His deep earnestness stands out all the more strikingly from the fact that, although, in these last hours, he rose to real heights of eloquence—now with lashing philippic, and again moved by the grieving love of a Hosea or a Jeremiah—yet he realized that he was speaking to the granite hearts of a people preoccupied with other interests than those which so stirred his own soul. Still he persisted, in the face of the same fate which had made the way of most of the real prophets so arduous, in trying to make them see the certain doom which

stared them in the face if they rejected his message.

The impassioned face of the Galilean prophet, lighted now with tenderness, now with sad reminiscence, and again with deep resentment and scathing denunciation, is one which cannot easily be effaced from memory's wall. Time has dealt unkindly with most of what he said on these epochal occasions; but the loving, fearless, pleading look of this Master of men can never be forgotten. Truth was too precious to him to be held in leash because of the angry glare of those who sought his life as an answer to his bold challenge.

If he spared none of his bitter enemies in his attempt to win them to his views of national duty, much less did he spare himself. For he would rather have died the most ignominious death at their hands than to have left out one word of all the fiery convictions which he believed God had planted in his soul. Even when, to have spoken mildly, apologetically, or with a sense of traditional awe before the influential ecclesiastics of the Temple, might have saved his life, he clung the more tenaciously to his faith, bravely declaring that to maintain the integrity of one's soul

was far more important than to win the plaudits of men through compromise.

It was this fundamental sincerity which kept Jesus from yielding to that first subtle temptation to become a popular Healer of men's physical and mental ills (Mark 1:35-38). To have the throngs of sick folk crowding his pathway; to accept the praises of the motley crowds of curious folk who always seem to have plenty of leisure to gape at one who promises them the rare thrills of a miracle-monger; or to induce his enemies to lay off from their attacks upon him because of his popularity with the crowds, did not in the least appeal to Jesus. Had he been a weakling, he would have trained with the majority. Had he not been a man who could read the political signs of the times, he would quickly have welcomed the backing of the eager Zealots, using his miracle-reputation to insure their loyalty, and to fan the flame of their revolutionary ambitions. Had his spiritual nature been less pure, he would have been unable to see that the ultimate welfare of a people can never be promoted by trafficking with the sleek advocates of religious compromise.

Jesus knew all too well that any movement which spent its time and energy playing up to

the sensational demands of the ignorant, was doomed to failure. He had too much respect for the higher spiritual needs of men to allow himself and his gracious message to be side-tracked so easily. And shrinking instinctively, as he did, from anything which might in any way exalt himself at the expense of God or his ability to make men think upon the truth he bore them, it was natural for him to steal away from the town of childlike folk, in the early morning hours, that he might renew his allegiance to the Father. Only so could he hope to rise to the mount of spiritual vision which would make it more certain than ever that he should never yield to the paltry pleadings of his disciples and friends that he utilize this popular curiosity to further his higher purposes later on.

He frankly regarded this as a studied attack of the Devil. He left Capernaum, and what seemed to be the beginning of a most auspicious work, in order that he might openly register his protest against any such prostitution of his cause to lower uses. He hoped that, in time, the people of Capernaum would welcome him back because of the religious message for which he stood. Meanwhile he promised himself that never again

would he be caught in the rôle of a Healer, if he could prevent it.

We have already seen how many-sided was the pressure brought to bear upon Jesus to accommodate himself to the accepted customs of Judaism. How easily he might have won a loyal following from among John's previous disciples, had he been willing to bind himself with the fasting rites and the baptismal service which he felt obliged to throw aside because they called attention away from the very simple and vital religious truths which he must advocate. Even his friendship for his beloved Master, John, must yield before this higher sense of duty.

Jesus simply omitted these ancient and highly respectable Jewish rites in order to give himself more freedom for the preaching of things so important to men's life. It meant little to him that he thus jeopardized his public standing, which otherwise he could easily have retained. It was not long, indeed, before both the Pharisaic leaders and John's disciples noticed this omission and openly accused him of irreverence for God's commands. Moderns, who affect a similar pious attitude of defense in matters of religious ritual, would do well to heed Jesus' answer to his critics.

In justification of his neglect of the old-time customs, Jesus seems to have become almost needlessly blunt and sarcastic. With marked severity in his voice (Mark 2:21), he would retort: "No sensible man ever tries to combine things which have no real affinity for each other. This old Jewish custom of fasting, for instance, is hopelessly outworn and useless. And why, pray tell me, with a religion so replete with virile elements as ours, should we be held back from advocacy of new truth simply to please an ignorant public and a few mossback officials of a defunct ecclesiasticism? As for me and mine, we intend to follow God and the prophets, heeding the call of inner religion, rather than the mere ritualistic commands concocted by the scribes!"

Or again he would urge in self-defense the fact that it would be the height of absurdity for himself and his men even to attempt to express their warm and living faith through use of the old forms which were counted so very essential in the Jewish religion. Faith must ever be free, really to thrive and make progress. It was progress or death with them! Their conception of truth was throbbingly real and impelling. Could they go back to the rites of death, and pretend that

hollow ceremonial held first place in their lives? Let those who must, find their consolation in thoughtless conformity to the dead rules of a dead past! (Mark 2:22[a, b].)

There is another very significant saying in one of the early Matthean sources (Matthew 12:5-6) which further illustrates both the keenness of Jesus' moral sense, and the depths of his honesty. Now it was a dangerous thing for a young, unschooled Galilean just launching out into a new type of work to array against himself the mightiest and most persistent forces of the land. Yet Jesus seemed to take the ground, which an open conscience bade him take, that a follower of truth must take no cognizance of hostility. Therefore he met inevitable opposition courageously, sometimes with a smile of indifference, and again with fierce denunciation of the motives behind his foes' attacks; but never a suggestion of timorous yielding did he exhibit.

In the case just referred to above, he met the insinuations of the Pharisees that he and his little band were disloyal to God and Judaism because they satisfied their hunger on the Holy Day, by laying bare the principle which lay behind all such natural conduct. He pointed out the fact

that necessity oftentimes invalidated long-established custom. For the maintenance of man's God-given life was certainly more sacred and essential than the observance of "a man-made rite" which had grown up to meet some particular need in the dim past, or perhaps had been laid upon an unintelligent public in order to satisfy the scruples of some particularistic group within Judaism. He insisted that whatever the higher physical needs of man required might, under such special circumstances, take precedence over the ancient law. Inasmuch as his disciples were actually obeying the law of downright necessity, to aid them in their task of carrying out God's will, they were, in the eyes of God, thoroughly guiltless of any wrong.

Jesus' sincerity is more especially revealed in the fact that he sought no ulterior justification for this startling breach of the Sabbath law. It was beneath him to resort to subterfuge, or apology. His conscience had long since ceased to chide him over casuistical details which had little in common with the main principles of ethical conduct. Therefore, he felt quite free to come out into the open in frank defense of the age-old human prin-

ciple that the upbuilding of the body for the service of man and God comes before Temple rites. And the humble peasant who has his heart set upon the doing of good to his kind is far nearer the mind of God than is the formalist priest who meticulously drones his way through the perfunctory rounds of ceremony and sacrifice. The one is soon done, and soon forgotten; the other builds out of the fabric of his soul a more stately mansion for the suitable housing of the spirit of Truth.

As if to clinch his argument, and to place himself forever upon record in this matter—whatever his critics might do with the plentiful ammunition he placed in their hands—Jesus summed up his views of Sabbath observance by uttering such a revolutionary declaration of independence that his hearers, both clergy and peasantry, must have been shocked beyond words. For, he declared (Mark 2:27), this holiest of all days had had its origin solely in God's desire to better human conditions. God himself was vastly beyond the need of special periods wherewith to support his dignity, or wherein he might encourage humanity to sustain suitable worship in his interests. God himself had ordained this day, con-

tinued Jesus, for man's own good, that he might thereupon render more leisurely and effective service to his fellow man.

Quite contrary to God's plain intent, man (and ecclesiastical interests, in particular) had turned this day of divine opportunity into a perfunctory institution utterly void of the broad and practical meaning with which God had imbued it. Therefore, said this startling young radical from the despised provinces—*therefore* there was no longer any special virtue in the mere observance of the Sabbath Day for its own sake. Only in so far as it continued to represent that supreme spirit of love for all men, and thus became exalted to a higher humanitarian level, was it of intrinsic worth!

Of course, in taking such an unheard-of stand, against all of the strongest traditions of the time, he was by no means unaware of the fact that he was finally and forever separating himself from the brethren of the cloth; and that, by a chasm which could never be recrossed. After this fatal utterance, his horrified, and at the same time clever, opponents felt fully justified (as do their strenuous defenders and successors in the holy faith of our own time) in going to any extremes

in order to get rid of such a "blasphemous upstart." Why, this Jesus was far worse than all previous rumors had depicted. From every point of view he was a thoroughly dangerous man! Jerusalem must put a stop to such wild talk! And if the Roman police only knew it, here was a man who might any time be found at the head of a secret band of cutthroats, raising the banner of revolt to cover up his malicious purposes of misleading the people of God!

Using such arguments to persuade themselves that they were fully justified in taking drastic action against Jesus, these religious fanatics proceeded (as we have seen) to strike hands with strange comrades. They allied themselves with the Herodian police, whom the typical Pharisee feared and hated worse than anything, except deviation from the inherited traditions of his race. Laying the facts before the foreign officials of Capernaum, they planned to disgrace Jesus in the eyes of the still adoring public. Resorting to the pet tool of the religious reactionary, they began to cast personal slurs upon the good name of the young Prophet. They accused him of intimacy with the lowest elements of the city life. They were not concerned as to the truth of their

assertions. It was enough if a whispering campaign could be started, for it would soon spread like wildfire over Capernaum. And so the phrase, "they say"—born of the Devil, and knowing no other home than the lower regions—began its deadly work against the purest of men.

They also began to heckle Jesus in the midst of his public speeches. But this plan did not always work so successfully, for the untrained carpenter oftentimes proved more than a match for the wit of "the learned in the Law." They found, to their amazement, that they could not bully him into silence. He had a way of turning their carefully prepared arguments into boomerangs which caused them no little discomfiture. One look from his honest eyes, one stinging rebuke of their casuistry from those honest lips, won him more friends among the Galileans who loved to watch this clash of wits and flashing of eyes, than all the talk with which they sought to smother him.

But the scribes played their trump card in egging on the police. True, the latter had nothing against Jesus personally, but there was always a chance that another of the many uprisings against the domineering foreigner might be hatching in

secret. Jesus would bear watching. Perhaps it would be just as well to seize him and hold him in custody until he had been thoroughly examined with regard to these rumors. After all, a Jew was a Jew. What matter if they did put another one of this despised race to a little inconvenience?

But, as has already been suggested, Jesus received warning from some mysterious source (was it through Joanna, the wife of Herod's own steward, as Luke 8:3 might intimate?) and hastily fled the country with such meagre supplies as his friends could hastily gather together. For he knew that John's fate would also be his, if he were captured. His plans for his work were by no means matured enough to risk everything by leaving himself to their doubtful mercy. Probably for some weeks he remained in lonely seclusion (Mark 7:24, 31), for when he did effect a secret return at a later time, he seemed wholly out of touch with events, and was obliged to inquire of his disciples as to what had occurred in the meantime (Mark 8:27).

Jesus' disciples seem, at times, to have been greatly concerned over his reckless disregard for the feelings of the religious teachers. Evidently,

on one occasion (Matthew 15: 12-14) they even went so far as to make cautious protest, as if advising him to tread more carefully. They reasoned that a policy of conciliation would, in the long run, make friends for their cause, whereas, if relations were strained much further, the entire movement would be endangered. Jesus, on the other hand, took stronger and stronger ground. He was so thoroughly disgusted with the hypocrisy of those who hounded him, that he bluntly insisted there could be no turning back from the belligerent course he was pursuing. At times he seemed to think that the scribes would sooner or later lose standing with the crowds and leave him to carry on his work. He could not speak vehemently enough regarding their hollow "piety," and the shame that such ignorant types should essay to "sit in *Moses'* seat"!

Very early in the training of the Twelve, he had attempted to prepare them for eventual hostilities. He had succeeded in steeling their hearts against all fear of opposition. He had filled them with a high regard for God's esteem, and for the approval of the coming Son of Man. He had taught them to be good sportsmen, to laugh at fate, and

take hardship and loss of reputation and property with a smile (Luke 6: 22-23). In the joyful outcome, he was sure, they would realize the full worth of their sacrifice.

When, at times, he saw people reputed to possess considerable wealth attending his meetings in the market or on the lakeside, his honest soul led him to warn them against their too evident satisfaction with life, and the temptations to which they necessarily fell heir in their lust for further possessions. Although he knew they could not understand his somewhat ascetic, and wholly unattractive, point of view, nevertheless he felt obliged to warn them that God expected them to dispose of their wealth and give themselves unhindered to preparation for the Day of Judgment.

Modern Christians are inclined to think Jesus somewhat extreme on this subject. Perhaps he did not know how to see things from the position of the well-to-do. Possibly he was more or less influenced by John's well-known prejudice against wealth, or by the views of the Essenes. It may be that he had in mind certain instances wherein wealth had been abused, to the detriment of the

poor. In any case, we must credit him with a spirit of pure honesty in taking this very unusual, and altogether unpopular, stand.

In all this strenuous opposition to the prevalent views of the day in which he lived, Jesus was nevertheless anxious that his hearers should not think that he was "deliberately and recklessly destroying the vital elements of Judaism," as his critics were wont to say (Matthew 5: 17). Quite contrary to their misleading statements, he really had a profound admiration for Moses and counted him among the greatest of the prophets. But he also felt very strongly that the scribes had, by their trivial interpretations of Moses' principles, practically annulled the usefulness of the ancient statements of those great truths. Therefore, in the interests of clarity and of humanity, Jesus counted it his task to restate these basal ideas in the popular language of the day, suggesting such changes as were called for by the experience of post-prophetic times. He felt that if he could save his people from the comparatively easy literalism of the scribes, and could point the way to a revival of inner religion, he would count his work well done (Matthew 5: 20). For then his people would be truly ready for the coming Judge,

whose standards of testing human worth were altogether ethical.

Judging all things by this lofty standard of rigid honesty, Jesus felt very keenly, as did the ethical prophets before him, that the prevailing worship and the Temple sacrifices themselves gravely lacked the marks of intelligence and sincerity. Evidently he began to note with what calm satisfaction and with what little searching of heart most people entered upon their devotions in the synagogue and at Jerusalem. How soon these were forgotten in the hum of the week's business and the cares of family life! To make sure that he and all of his followers faced God with pure hearts and thoroughly ethical intentions which should reach throughout every thought and act of their lives, he drew frequent pictures of worshippers whose minds had been cleansed of all ulterior motives; who offered to God their full devotion before even thinking of claiming any blessing from His fatherly hand (Matthew 5: 23-24).

The glib promises and the soft adulation with which worshippers were in the habit of praying in public places fairly nauseated Jesus' sensitive soul. Men were simply imitating the fawning of

the worldly-minded courtiers, and at heart had little respect for the majesty of the name which sprang so lightly to their lips. With intense severity, therefore, Jesus laid upon himself and his friends the stern admonition to yield to no such temptations; for God required of men utter simplicity, frankness, brevity, and unquestioned purity of purpose.

For the crass show and pomp which, in every age, are popularly supposed to flatter and win the favor of deity, Jesus had supreme abhorrence. He openly despised and denounced any scribe who sought the reputation of excessive piety in the eyes of the public. Self-advertised goodness, even in that reporter-less day, was doubtless rather common (Mark 12:38-40; Luke 18:9-14). Such exhibitions drove him, ever more frequently, into the "secret presence" of the One whose personality was always before him as the Ideal of his life (Luke 16:13). To pray in any other way, were to offer insult to high Heaven, and to turn the most delicate and precious instrument of progress into a thing of vilest abuse! Could a man play false to the advances and confidence of his best friend? Much less could he treat Almighty God with shameless disdain (Matthew

6: 1-4, 16-18). No, a religion of fair play was strictly in order. Anything less than this was a sham, and unworthy of a real man.

A very interesting insight into the workings of Jesus' most secret thoughts is afforded, in these early sources, when one of his disciples records the fact that the Master could not bear to deal harshly with the mistakes and shortcomings of his fellowmen. Most people are too easily inclined to pick flaws in others and to regard themselves as creatures of distinctly superior type. Clearly enough, Jesus had trained himself to pause a moment before uttering condemnation of any man, meanwhile searching his own life to see if perchance the same evil—or even a grosser one—were not ingrained within his own nature (Luke 6: 37, 41-42). God alone represented, in his mind, that undefiled goodness which could, without a moment's hesitation, be set up as an unfailing standard of living. Who, among men, dared usurp this final prerogative of the Almighty? Not even a Jesus!

If ever an incident in Jesus' life could give the lie to the later claims of the Church that he blandly advertised his own sinlessness, claimed the sole right among men to forgive sins, and

talked incessantly about his own superiority over all others on earth, it is such a one as this just cited. The Christ-pictures of the second and later centuries are so clearly in direct contrast to these early portraits of the humble prophet-soul, that anyone of historic sensitiveness cannot hesitate for a moment in deciding between the two.

All this beautiful chastening of spirit, this warm-hearted human love, this deep reverence for the God-likeness in a brother's face and character are, in themselves, convincing evidence that *this Jesus is the real one*—the kind for whom all ages and hearts deeply hunger, because he is their very own. Here, truly, is a life based upon rock foundations of truth, instant obedience to the all-entrancing will of a heavenly Father—the highest peaks of his inner consciousness, indeed—being the unchanging spirit of his momentous career (Luke 6: 47-49).

So certain was Jesus that the path he was following was the best that could be found, that, in the hour when bitterest criticism and the pettiest of hostility broke over him with almost crushing force, he still could throw back his strong carpenter shoulders and look high Heaven full in the face—his face illuminated, because the Ideal

was shining there before his earnest gaze—and say, as if only he and THAT were in existence, "I appeal to History to justify me. Time shall yet prove me right, for I have truly loved, and love gives one the true vision of life." (Luke 7:35; 24:25.)

Let a new centurion stand in awe and in admiration before the memories of this truly great life, saying slowly and with full meaning: "Henceforth, let no man dare call himself a follower of Jesus who is not, at heart, equally sincere and human!"

CHAPTER VIII

FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS

When Jesus chose the ringing words of Israel's unknown Restoration prophet and poet (Isaiah 61: 1-2) as the keynote of his ministry, he was hardly conscious of any radical departure in his life. For probably all through his busy carpenter days he had found real delight in making friendly contacts with the humble folk of his native village. In his round of daily duties, he must have come across many cases of need, and have noticed how the obscure and neglected people welcomed his attentions and looked forward to his friendly visits with unfeigned eagerness.

To one of Jesus' kindly spirit, these ministrations were not a thing apart from his regular carpentry. Rather was this his real work, and the carpenter's trade simply a means of furnishing opportunities for helpfulness to those who might otherwise have very little to lighten their lonely hours. While his hands were busy with hammer and plane and saw, building houses or uten-

sils for use in home and on the farm, his heart must have busied itself constantly (as any artisan so well knows) with the human problems which made up so large a part in the lives of his needy friends.

With no eight-hour schedule to follow, and no mechanical time-clock to punch at stated intervals, Jesus must have stolen many an extra hour from his appointed tasks in which to add a bit of sunshine to the drab and dragging days of the suffering and sorrow-stricken among his acquaintances. His holidays, and especially the oft-recurring Sabbath rest beginning at sundown Friday evening, seem to have held a very attractive place in his heart. This enforced leisure taught him to use his powers of service in multitudinous ways which only the friendly soul can appreciate.

He learned to gather spiritual power from association with these responsive children of the great Father of his people. Indeed, as his later teaching so abundantly illustrates, he actually found touch with God Himself, that deepest Reality in human experience, through the anguish, patient courage, and gratitude of these fellow Nazarenes.

It was not at all surprising, therefore, when on

that memorable Sabbath following Jesus' return from the Jordan, his congregation at the little synagogue heard him quote the cheering words from the Roll of Isaiah mentioned above. This young carpenter's life was openly known to all of them. He had lived in his happy way before their eyes for many years. He was beloved of them because of the many kind deeds for which he was noted all through the village. And doubtless many a solemn head nodded in grateful memory as Jesus went on, that golden day, to tell of his recent experiences and of his plans for the immediate future.

Little as they liked to lose him from their neighborly life, they seemed, one and all, to hear his message with delight and hearty concurrence. If God was seeking out their friend for more extended service in other towns of Galilee, who were they to say Him nay? Had not God thus drawn Amos from his farm, and Moses from his desert retreat? All felt that Nazareth would be honored in this choice of one of their favored sons. Mary, the widowed mother, was to be congratulated most heartily. Joseph's honored name, also, would be enhanced in the prophetic exaltation of his eldest son.

This spirit of receptive warmth must have made Jesus' blood tingle with delight. Certainly their evident appreciation furnished a most auspicious background for his address. One need not wonder that he rose to unexpected, even to poetic, heights of eloquence and imparted to them the rich glow of his own awakened soul. As they returned to their homes, they must have gathered in little groups, commenting upon the gracious words which had that day fallen from the carpenter's lips.

Had not the story of this touching incident been confused, by the editor of Luke (4: 22^{b}-30), with that of the later rejection of Jesus as told in the gospel of Mark (6: 1-6), the world would have entertained a much higher opinion both of Jesus and of the people of Nazareth. As popularly conceived, the later church view holds that Jesus was here thrusting himself forward as a heavenly Messiah, and that *therefore* his fellow townsmen refused to consider his royal claims upon their loyalty. This conception is not only thoroughly anachronistic and inexcusably confusing, but quite remote from the facts as clearly established in our earliest records.

As it was, Jesus bent his steps without delay

toward Capernaum, the new centre of his work, with the hearty blessing of his home town and of his family upon him. Certainly, at this time, neither he nor they ever dreamed of the ecclesiastical gulf which would so soon separate them almost hopelessly. Only thus, it seems, can we understand the tremendous eagerness and irrepressible optimism of Jesus in those first happy days of his mission.

In the very first part of his narrative, the author of Mark (whose sequence of events seems at least to suggest the main lines of Jesus' labors) tells how insistently the unfortunate folk of Galilee sought Jesus out, and how patiently he bore the publicity which necessarily faced him because of this unusual interest on his part. An occasional demented person, or some lonely leper living in the outskirts of a village, would seem to find recovery and gain new interest in life due to Jesus' cheering assurances of God's love and the approach of a better Day for all.

While there is no question but that the miracle-element in these stories has received plenty of amplification at the hands of successive gospel editors, yet underneath the accounts stands the patent fact that Jesus did impart to such pitiable

cases his own naïve but heroic faith in man's right to full powers of health and happiness. Many of our modern healings certainly occur along this very line although the superstitious explanations accompanying them are too often far from convincing.

One of the most startling and successful incidents of this type has to do with one Mary, of the village of Magdala, located perhaps in the vicinity of Capernaum (Luke 8:2[b]). Little is made of the actual recovery of Mary from what is referred to as a severe case of dementia. But Jesus is clearly given credit for encouraging her to fight her way back to health. The brief hints in the gospel records of her eagerness to show her gratitude for her rescue from such a hopeless condition, and her beautiful, womanly devotion to Jesus in his hours of danger, as well as after his death, make up one of the most charming and tender chapters in all religious history.

There is absolutely no justification for confusing Mary of Magdala with the unnamed woman of the street mentioned in Luke 7:36-50, or with the one described in John 7:53—8:11. Nor is it fair to use the term "Magdalene" of our modern courtesans, implying as it does that the Mary of

olden time bore the stain of the various sins such as our time wrongly, hypocritically, lays against the souls of unfortunates to-day.

Emphatic protest should further be made against modern poets and dramatists who seek to capitalize the increasing popular interest in Jesus by trying to make out a case of light romance between Jesus and Mary, as has several times been done. For Jesus, again in line with prophetic procedure, had deliberately forsworn all thoughts of a home of his own, and that, against all of the natural expectations and domestic tendencies of his people. Never, by one look or word, does he suggest anything but the most absorbing devotion to his Cause, the advance of God's Kingdom. In the anticipation of its early realization, and with an ascetic's determination to subject every thought and emotion to this one supreme ideal in order to be fully ready for the great Day, Jesus found no time or need for dreams of a home and a family. It is very likely that Mary of Magdala, catching this same spirit, and thoroughly awakened in body and mind by her new experience (the most ennobling that any human being can conceive), fully appreciated Jesus' attitude and shared his devotion.

On certain dramatic occasions, when the crowds drew heavily upon the young Prophet's heart, he would recall some great passage from the wisdom of the Jewish sages, and then plead with all his powers for the sin-laden among his hearers to take immediate advantage of the waiting mercy of God. (Cf. Jesus, Son of Sirach, "Wisdom," Chap. 51: 23-27, with Matthew 11: 28-30.) And they came! They came in numbers, lonely and forlorn, drawn, in some cases, probably, by the earnestness and interest of the only friend they had known in years. And he associated with them, openly and unabashed as he had done in Nazareth at times, although the traditions of his strict Pharisaic contemporaries sternly forbade. Indeed, one who dared transgress in so important a matter as this was commonly supposed to class himself with his friends, and so was looked upon as himself contaminated and therefore outlawed in the eyes of God and men. And our own day is almost as unfair!

Mark relates the startling story as to how Jesus persuaded one Levi to give up his customs-house position in order to join himself and the Four in their preparations for the Kingdom (Mark 2: 13-17). As suggested before, this was a strange ac-

cession, indeed. Here was a young man, perhaps in his early twenties, who had so far broken away from his Jewish training as to seek work in the employ of the Roman conqueror. In adding such a one to his group, Jesus would further expose himself to the accusations of his enemies, this time on the serious ground of disloyalty.

But Jesus was interested in *people* because of all the good he found in them. Evidently this outcast Levi (known among his business associates under the Roman name of Matthew) appealed to him as having both ability and religious fervor of no mean order. People had misjudged the young collector of customs. Jesus had uncovered his finer qualities and made him eager to express himself in nobler ways. Had Levi also discovered in himself a growing feeling of disgust and revolt against his employers? Had he made up his mind to show those Jews who ridiculed and despised him that he was still loyal to the faith of his fathers by joining some promising movement destined to break the Roman yoke?

In any case, Levi did nothing by halves. He boldly announced a public dinner in honor of Jesus and, no doubt with Jesus' full concurrence, sent out invitations to not a few of his acquaint-

ances among the tax-gatherers and others who, for various reasons, had broken with Jewish circles. And the Teacher took his place at table with these men—not only unashamed to be seen in such company, but actually delighted to find such an opportunity to lay his cause before them, as if they were among the most respectable citizens of Galilee!

Of course, the whole town would quickly hear of this startling event. Excited tongues would soon set the prosaic town quite aflame with eagerness to see what was taking place at Levi's home. This friendly feast would therefore assume the proportions of a veritable town scandal before the news had traveled many hours. The inevitable oriental crowd would soon throng the place and, with the help of the ever-talkative servants, regular reports which might well provoke the admiration of our modern press would soon begin to issue from the scene of the feast.

But a touch of real color was given to the picture when a scribe or two happened along and stopped to inquire the reason for the throngs about the door and the unusual buzz of excitement among the onlookers. What must have been the astonishment of these dignitaries when

they learned that *Jesus,* this stranger from Nazareth, held the centre of the stage, and that he had stooped to defile himself by entering the home of this son of Belial, not to mention the feast given in his honor!

At last the new prophet had shown his real purpose in coming to Capernaum! The coarse grain in his nature was here clearly in evidence, and his cause was worthless. For no real son of Abraham would be reckless enough to seek out such boon companions. And it was rumored, further, that people of most unsavory character were among the guests at the banquet! Was all this an indication, after all, that another would-be prophet was among them seeking cheap fame for himself at the expense of all that was sacred in the life of Israel? Was he, at heart, one with the "sinners" who thus clung fondly to his following?

Conscious of their proud status, the scribes elbowed their way through the gaping crowd, strode forward within full view of the festive table and then, with hands raised in pious horror at this unbelievable sight, they ejaculated in unctuous tones loud enough for both host and guests to hear, "How can this fellow do such an impious

thing, contaminating himself with such wretched company!" Then, before leaving in proud disgust, they turned toward the four disciples of Jesus who, supposedly up to this time, had been paragons of propriety in the community and very respectable members of the synagogue congregation, and warned them to have done with this questionable character who was leading them astray. How could these men of standing—Simon, Andrew, and their friends—condone such shameless flaunting of vice and sin against all that the holy Law represented! And the two shocked guardians of the sacred Customs started to take their departure, thoroughly convinced that the world must be saved their way, or not at all.

Outwardly Jesus seemed quite unperturbed by this unceremonious interference; but in his heart he became more and more hotly indignant to think that they had utterly misunderstood, and perhaps wilfully misinterpreted, the humanitarian purpose of the gathering. He hastily scanned the faces of those who sat with him at the feast, as if to see what they thought of the whole matter. Then, reassured by their unfeigned look of resentment toward the scribes, and with his own

heart swelling with deep desire to be of real help to these men, he raised himself upon his couch and hurled sarcastic words of challenge after the retreating forms of the protesting Pharisees, words evidently designed to widen the chasm already existing between himself and them.

He told them bluntly that they were the arch-sinners in the case, although they held themselves haughtily above any consideration of the only truth which might possibly heal and purify them. While he had all hope for these despised outcasts at table, he regarded the pretentious teachers of the Law as hopelessly hardened and lost in the sight of God! As for himself, he counted it a supreme honor to throw his lot with these hungry-hearted men on whom God had infinite compassion, rather than with their ungodly critics!

And one can imagine that the blood rose high in the cheeks of the Master of men that day, as he turned back to the fellow-guests about him and proceeded to thrill them with the picture that he had in his mind of that wonderful future which lay just before them. He doubtless made many friends that day by his heroic challenge of the teachers of the Law and his loyal defense of

his new-found friends. But he also succeeded in making bitter enemies as well, who would cherish the severe slight he had cast upon their reputations, who would never forget or forgive this cursed Nazarene!

Upon another memorable occasion, Jesus is said to have been a dinner guest of a man who evidently stood high in Pharisaic circles (Luke 7:36-50). It was soon made apparent that the host bore little respect for the new Prophet. Possibly he saw, in this public display, a good opportunity to create a spectacle for himself and his friends by attempting to put Jesus to shame through his superior knowledge of the Law. The latter, for his part, seems not to have expected much in the way of courtesy, or else he had a most marvelous hold upon his temper. For even after being shamefully neglected at the door (none of the common courtesies usually extended to guests being offered him, even by the servants) he took his place at the table as if nothing had happened. He did not give his host the pleasure of seeing that he really felt the slight so rudely and studiously administered to him. He bided his time, alert opportunist that he was, knowing that sooner or later occasion would present itself

wherein he might use the incident with telling effect.

The opportunity came in a most unexpected way. A woman of the street entered! Apparently well-known in Capernaum, she had been attracted to Jesus' meetings in the market-place and at the lakeside by his reputation of friendliness toward unfortunates like herself. Deeply touched by the gracious words of hope which she had heard from his lips, and now drawn to Simon's house by news of the excited crowd, she had pressed forward to the doorway in time to see Simon and his servants insult Jesus by refusing him the guest-greeting which every respectable home furnished.

Keenly stung by Simon's lack of respect for the kindly Prophet, and determined to atone for the slight cast upon this friend of the friendless in so far as she might, the woman crept in past the doorway, at a moment when the servants were intent upon listening to the conversation in the inner room. Silently she bent her steps to the couch upon which the Teacher reclined. In the confusion, no one had seemed to notice her presence. She kneeled reverently at Jesus' feet, intending to anoint them with a jar of ointment

which she had probably bought for quite other purposes. But the sense of her proximity to this lover of men and women, and the remembrance of her sins, and of his assurances of God's care and forgiveness, utterly melted her to tears. She bent low over his feet, shaking with the sobs which told the depths of her grief and her gratitude.

Suddenly noticing that, all unwittingly, she had allowed her tears to fall upon his feet, and quite at a loss as to means of atoning for this embarrassing situation, she hastily caught up the disheveled tresses which had fallen about his ankles and dried his feet with feverish haste. Then, with a touch of supreme reverence and tenderness, she pressed grateful kisses upon his feet. Finally she poured the costly unguent—the price of her sin—over his feet in a last act of speechless devotion.

Jesus, meanwhile, was by no means unaware of all that was transpiring, so unexpectedly, so unceremoniously. Whether or not he had seen the woman before, he knew instinctively what brought her there. He appreciated all that it meant for her to dare appear in such a superior company for his sake. He watched her actions

with intense interest, felt the burning tears upon his feet, and heard the sobs which told the story of her life and of her desire for something better. He understood her unspoken gratitude. And he made no effort to stay the demonstration. To him it was a fulfilment of divine love, awakened in a human breast. He was sure the Kingdom of God was nigh at hand when souls like this turned back to God for restoration and peace.

Not until he happened to glance up and across the table, not until he saw the sneering face of Simon, his host, did Jesus realize the incongruity of the situation. Then, stirred to the depths by the proud and cynical look on Simon's countenance, all of his intense prophetic wrath was aroused against the man. His host had shamed him in the sight of all these guests. He could endure a slight of that kind for the sake of the work he represented. But here was a poor woman who, whatever her erring past, was eager to take her place in the true family of God. Could any man so despise God, the forgiving Father, and responsive goodness crying out from a repentant heart, that he would seek to deny her the inalienable right of fellowship with God!

Springing to an upright position, with a look

that fairly transfixed the startled Simon, Jesus swept aside the scornful looks and remarks directed at himself, and said to his host, in tones which vibrated with tensity and compelling earnestness, "Simon, this unfortunate woman has, out of her generosity, done me the belated honors which your scornful heart denied me. Furthermore, she has—with all of her supposed irreligion—shown a much finer appreciation of God's requirements and of His gracious forgiveness than you have ever dreamed of showing. In all solemnity I tell you, Simon, that God can readily wipe away every single sin which this woman may have committed. He is anxious to restore her to her rightful place in His redeemed family. But you—who remain so falsely content with your Pharisaic status—you have a heart like flint! You are absolutely unappreciative of God's mercy extended to you! I tell you that *you remain unforgiven* by your heavenly Father, because you do not know the first beginnings of love, human or divine!"

As Jesus turned to the woman, who now stood dumfounded, tear-dimmed, and entranced by such an unexpected defense upon his part, he said to her with a tenderness almost God-like in

its understanding compassion, "Woman, God calls you to a better life than the one into which hard circumstances have driven you. Go back home, with His deep peace and the sense of His full forgiveness in your heart. You are His from this day henceforth!"

Was it after some such scene as this in the house of Simon, that Jesus turned to the crowds that had followed him to the lakeside and said to them, with passionate intensity, "Do you people really understand what has happened this day? Can you think for a minute that God is more pleased to have the masses of us Jewish people live our complacent, punctilious lives, as we commonly do, than to see one—even one—of these poor unfortunates, whom we so often despise, lift up hands and heart full of desperate appeal for forgiveness and recognition in His holy sight? I tell you, in all earnestness, we ought all of us to be ashamed of our emotionless religion. We have *all* gone astray! We should all come back to God with that wholehearted devotion and determination which He so much delights to see in His children. For all are dear to Him. He cannot bear the thought of losing one, even one,

from His great family!" (See Matthew 18: 12-14; Luke 15: 4-7.)

Or again, when he saw the Jewish clerks from the customs-house and other outcasts pressing close to his side with hunger and eagerness in their eyes, he also noticed that the Pharisaic scribes were passing sarcastic asides about him and the lowly nature of his hearers (Luke 15: 1-2). On such occasions he would try to make clear to them, by using the simplest kind of illustrations, how intensely all Heaven was interested in the welfare of even the humblest human individual. Like a precious coin lost from the necklace or headband of a housewife; or like a younger son straying away from home and a father's guidance, so God in His great mercy and understanding of human values regarded these outcast sons and daughters of Israel whom many considered hopelessly bad.

And then Jesus would stress the fact that "the return" of these "lost ones" was of tremendous moment in the eyes of Heaven. Vastly more, in fact, than the circumspect observance of the Jewish ritual which the conceited scribes were wont to offer in the name of religion. Thus, making

no effort to appease his critics, but spending most of his time in the hope of winning the unconventional men and women who seemed to find new life in his message, Jesus soon found himself the inevitable victim of circumstances. The religious and political authorities regarded him more and more as a dangerous character. And they maintained a close watch upon all his movements, hoping that at some auspicious moment they might get rid of him without too much publicity.

On the other hand, once having chosen to throw in his fortune with the unorganized and comparatively powerless common people, he found that he was losing hold upon many of the so-called "respectable" classes because of the strenuous reform program which he proposed to carry through. He soon found himself surrounded with a dwindling crowd of nondescripts whose only claim upon history is the fact that they were intensely interested in building a better world, and in furthering what they regarded as the will of God to that end. Like Jesus, they cared little that they did not enjoy popular esteem. They preferred to live for an ideal. They endured as seeing an invisible Kingdom of

Right and Justice upon the earth. They found increasing joy in their new brotherhood. And they helped Jesus bear up under the slur of his new title, applied to him by the religious authorities of the time, "the friend of renegades and of harlots!" Wisdom may be slow to act sometimes, but if anything has been demonstrated in the course of the centuries it is the undoubted fact that, in choosing to stand for the ideal of human love and brotherhood with the humble backing of the common people of Galilee, Jesus saw much farther into the future and built his Cause upon much firmer foundations than if he had yielded to the Great Temptation—that of accepting the support of the so-called religious authorities, and the empty honors which they would have accorded him as the price of his soul. If Jesus had been a weakling, in other words, the world would have lost one of its best friends and saviors. Conventional religion, moreover, would have dug one more grave in its cemetery of the dead.

CHAPTER IX

HOURS OF BITTER LONELINESS

One of Jesus' sunny nature and humanitarian interests would never give in lightly to the forces of opposition. Bruised and sometimes fairly stunned, as he was, by the repeated blows showered upon him by officials of Church and State, by the desertion of friends and the defection of disciples, he yet held his own with an indomitable courage unsurpassed in the annals of religion. But Jesus was human, with humanity's limitations. Even the Prophet who could thrill multitudes of Galileans with his happy pictures of God's reign over a peaceful earth must sooner or later bow in defeat before the minions of hatred and prejudice, and pay the penalty for his daring dream by hanging limply upon an alien cross.

"Man of Sorrows" we rightly call him, referring to the overwhelming sadness and ignominy through which he was called upon to pass in his latter days. And all the more deeply did he feel the bitterness of the draught of death be-

cause he had first drunk to the full the keen joys of normal living. We do him a wrong to think of him as an unfeeling "God," merely passing lightly through the passions which mean so much to mankind. And he held the prizes of spiritual living too high to let them drop from his lifeless fingers, at the last, without a broken heart.

That was a sad day for Jesus when, as Mark puts it in a word or two (3:22[a]; 7:1), Jerusalem took a vigorous hand in the battle against the young Prophet. For these men were experienced in the art of holding assizes against heretics in the faith. They had succeeded against the mighty John the Baptist. Why not against this "untutored imitation of the Machærus prisoner"? They could speak with the authority of the Sanhedrin behind them. The crowds would fade as they entered the arena. And, besides, they had subtle allies in the Herodian police whenever the interests of the two groups lay in the same direction.

The stream of events is not clearly outlined in the meagre records at our disposal, but it seems fairly definite that from the day when the officials began to placard Galilee with the news that Jesus was just another of these insane fellows who, from time to time, came around clamoring for a

hearing, real trouble began. They seem to have begun their attacks in trying to persuade the curious onlookers and other more interested followers of Jesus to leave him to his unhappy fate. Failing in this, they attempted to heckle Jesus during his addresses, hoping thus to make a show of his ignorance and render him the laughing-stock of the populace. Here again, as we have seen, Jesus seems to have surprised them by his ready retorts, and his ability to quote Scripture with pointed earnestness.

The scribes had one more card to play before appealing to the force of the Roman police. They appear to have visited Nazareth, and there to have persuaded Mary and Jesus' brothers and sisters that he was most certainly *out of his head!* How else could his strange actions be explained? He was doing everything that the Law of Moses clearly forbade, even to the shameless breaking of the holy Sabbath day. And now there was plenty of evidence to show that he was consorting with men (and some said with women) of most unsavory reputation! If he were allowed to go on without interference, he surely would bring the whole family into disgrace by playing into the hands of the radical Zealots. And they all knew,

from recent history, the terrible results of such uprisings.

The ruse worked perfectly (Mark 3:21, 31). The whole family was so thoroughly aroused that at least Mary and the brothers traveled all the two days' journey to Capernaum to induce Jesus to give up his wild plans and return to Nazareth and his carpenter work. Had they succeeded, the world would have lost its major prophet. He would have lost his own soul, for much less than a mess of pottage (Mark 8:36-37). True, the ecclesiastical forces would have patted him on the back as an obedient son of the Law; but he would have stultified his conscience in refusing to obey the higher law of Love.

This might be called one of Jesus' real temptations were it not for the fact that he reacted to the appeals of his family with the same firmness with which he answered the scribes themselves. For he well knew that the latter were back of this family interference. This fact, and the fact that he loved his Mother and brothers so dearly, gave a tone of deep sadness to the answer he returned to their repeated urgings. For, keeping himself carefully out of their hands, he sent word through the crowd, which had been listening to his teach-

ing, that he could not possibly consider their request.

Then turning slowly back to his listeners, as one whose heart was utterly broken by some unexpected news, he said to them with intense emotion: "Friends, my family think me quite demented. They insist that I must give up my work and return to the old life. I cannot yield, for God has spoken. Henceforth *you* must be both Mother and Brothers to me. Together we will do the will of God!" And these untutored but devoted souls did the best they could to fill the empty place in his heart.

But Jesus could not get over this break with his family. The word-pictures which he used after this were more often than before tinged with sadness (Mark 4: 1-9). He could not understand why so many people should refuse to follow the way which to him was life indeed. But he did appreciate such response as these devoted friends were giving in answer to his appeal. For such as they, life was becoming daily richer and full of happiness (Mark 4: 8).

As soon as his work permitted, and after laying his plans with all possible care, Jesus invited his little band of disciples—by this time probably

twelve in number—to accompany him on a brief visit to Nazareth. He hoped that he might undo the mischief which the scribes had wrought, and that he might somehow persuade his family and fellow townsmen that he really was sane and thoroughly sensible in his religious convictions.

Mark tells us that Jesus was given another opportunity to address the congregation on the Sabbath (6: 1-4, 6). And again, we are told, he held the people spellbound; for he was pleading for his life, and theirs. Never had he thrown himself more earnestly into his public pleadings, for there present were the members of his own family, and his relatives—all of whom were dearer than life itself. Only Truth stood between himself and them! Could they see it? Would they respond, and join that growing company who looked forward to God's coming Kingdom?

His hopes were vain. His friends were visibly moved, at times, by his arguments, and they were more than astonished at his development during the year or so that he had been away from them. He had been so quiet and modest while living among them that they could hardly realize that this eloquent and passionate speaker was he. But the influence of the scribes held them in thrall,

and they refused to have anything to do with him or his program of activities. In fact, as they thought and talked it all over, they rather resented his coming and his effrontery in addressing them in the synagogue. His recent actions had placed him outside the pale of their interest. He was no longer one of them!

Even James, his next younger brother, seems to have taken very decided ground against Jesus. And Mary, yielding to the pressure of public opinion and obedient to her orthodox training, likewise tried to shut her mother's heart against her eldest and most beloved son! When Jesus saw how they were shunning his presence, he gazed upon them in utter astonishment for a moment, then said sadly, "Can it be that my own people are the only ones who have no kind word to speak for me? Shall strangers heed the message of God I bear, and my own kin shut me out of their lives!" And he strode away in silence, followed by the earnest little group of men who believed in him and had staked their all upon his integrity.

Some time after this event, in one of his talks to his assembled friends, he said with significant emphasis, "If you think our movement will gain more adherents by conciliatory and compromis-

ing methods, let me tell you that sort of procedure will only spell its doom. No, for myself I must speak out my God-given message just as I see it, though the heavens fall. It seems to be my destiny to smite and divide, and to win the hatred even of my own household!" (See Matthew 10: 34-36.)

After Jesus had carried on his work in Galilee for a year and a half or more, he was suddenly forced into exile by the threatening attitude of the Herodian police (Mark 7: 24, 31). Several weeks seem to have passed before he found himself able to get in touch with his disciples. When finally they did effect a reunion at the northern end of the lake, he hurried them off to the north Jordan region to assure the safety of himself and his little band of faithful men. He had been so long out of touch with events in Galilee, that he found it necessary to make numerous inquiries as to what had happened since his departure.

Making due allowance for the decided messianic increment which has crept into the Markan account, it appears that the conversation soon turned to the natural question as to what people were saying about Jesus and his ideas since his flight to Phœnicia. Was further work hopeless,

or were enough people still interested to make it possible to return after this trouble had quieted down? (Mark 8:27-30.)

The various answers of the disciples were most interesting to Jesus, but not altogether to his liking. For there was a striking change in these men, and it did not take him long to penetrate to the depths of their hearts. They began by assuring him that, among the common people, he was even more popular than ever. For he was being hailed on all sides as fully the equal of John the Baptist. And some went so far as to declare that he was the peer of the miracle-working Elijah! Their eagerness, and the uniformity of their replies, aroused and confirmed Jesus' fears. Detesting flattery, as he heartily did, he was not at all pleased at the thought of rivalry with the great prophets for whom he held the most profound respect and reverence.

With that searching look which made impossible any other than the most honest answer, Jesus gazed straight into the eyes of his men, one by one, and then said, quietly but with the utmost intensity, "But you men—where do *you* now stand with reference to me and all the careful teaching I have given you?" There was a mo-

ment's embarrassed silence, until Peter summoned up enough courage to say, with a tone full of harshness and desperation, "Master, the time has come for action. There is only one way to save the day, and for that the time is fully ripe; the people are more than ready. Raise the banner of revolt against these Roman interlopers, announce yourself as the long-expected Messiah of God, and your popularity will sweep all Palestine and bring that deliverance for Israel about which you have preached day in and day out from the beginning. Everything is ready, Master. Thousands of men will take the sword and follow your banner. And we twelve—you know that, for you, we are ready to go even unto death!" (Matthew 26: 35.)

Peter had rehearsed his part well, and his tones grew more confident and insistent as he proceeded with his appeal. He was fully convinced that Jesus could not refuse to take advantage of all this Zealot interest now so thoroughly aroused on his behalf. Besides, the whole future of the work was in the balance. Passivity now would be interpreted by the people as cowardice and weakness. Jesus simply *must* throw aside his prejudices against the use of force, and accept the

Davidic crown at the hands of thousands of eager Jewish warriors! (Cf. John 6: 15.)

As Peter and the Twelve pressed closely around Jesus, their eyes flashing with loyal anticipation, they were amazed at the rapidly changing expressions which swept over the countenance of their Teacher. They could see that he was heartily displeased. Their flattery had left him untouched and sad. Their appeal for battle had turned him momentarily to stone. He stood dumfounded by the words he had heard from Peter's lips. He lifted his face for just one impressive moment toward heaven, his lips moving as if in communion with his Father. Then he turned sharply upon Peter and the others, and in a tone which he had never before used in addressing them, he said slowly and with painful bitterness: "Let me never, never again hear you call me *a Messiah!* My mission is not one of war and needless bloodshed. The times are in the Father's hands. He will bring the Kingdom in His own way. But *we must preach* the good news of His reign, and of the coming of the Son of Man. For Him alone is the throne of Israel reserved. Any other course would be disloyalty to God, and merely a temporary and futile device doomed to

failure. Trust God, men, and believe in my gospel!"

Then, as their faces fell in unspeakable disappointment, he poured into their unwilling ears the vision which he had conceived, in his lonely exile, of the immediate future. It sounded like the knell of death to the disciples. Nothing except the utmost personal loyalty could have kept them at his side after that. For he began to predict further persecutions upon the part of the scribes, desperate collusion upon the part of the Herodian police, and (with John's imprisonment and death fresh in his mind) inevitable death by some shocking means for himself (Mark 8:31-32)!

Peter could endure no more. Seizing Jesus rudely by the shoulder, and speaking face to face the more successfully to emphasize his words, this loyal leader of the group said with all the passion and conviction he could command: "Such a fate can never by any remotest possibility befall you, Master! There are too many of us ready to defend you. All Galilee would rise—"

Peter got no further with his earnest protest. Jesus, suddenly thrown into one of those rare moods which seized him in times of great crises,

pushed Peter away from him, saying in measured and exceedingly bitter tones: "Away, away from me, arch-Tempter! How little you realize what you say. You have failed to understand the will of God. You have missed the point of all my teaching. The hot-headed Zealots have captured your soul. You would plunge your country once more into horrible bloodshed. I say, away with all such suggestions. I will have none of it. The will of God must prevail!"

To say that the disciples were absolutely stunned by Jesus' vehemence, would be to state the case too mildly. They could not get over the shock of it for days and for months. They were so sure they were right, that they decided to bide their time in the hope that Jesus would change his views. Only one of the Twelve nursed his disappointment to such an extent that he began to seek a way to sever his connection with Jesus and his movement. He was torn between personal loyalty to the Master and his desire to see the movement turned into an independence campaign in the interests of the whole country.

Jesus, on his part, brooded over this bitter disappointment for many days. The sudden change in his friends, and the renewed activity of the

Zealots, put him on his guard henceforth. It also led him to expand his views of the Kingdom in much greater detail, and to assume far more sternness in laying down the requirements for discipleship. Hereafter no one might consider himself a worthy member of the movement unless he entered it wholly committed to Jesus' principles, and with a dedication to very death itself if circumstances called for such a violent outcome (Mark 8:34—9:1). He invariably closed his addresses, however, with the firm assurance that they would in the very near future witness the complete fulfilment of his predictions.

More and more, as Jesus' burden of loneliness grew heavier, did he resort to prayer and meditation. In this way he sought to clarify his own thought and fortify himself against any possible temptation to lower his standards. He hoped thus, also, to impress the disciples with the extreme seriousness of the situation, and of the need of keeping themselves strictly in the mood of obedience to what he loved to call "the will of God" (Mark 8:2). While it was a great disappointment to Jesus to discover that his Twelve did not fully share his convictions, he yet found untold comfort in his meditations upon the hero-

ism of the prophets (Mark 9: 4), and in a deeper sense of the encouraging presence of God in his life (Mark 9: 7).

When, finally, the devoted group was forced to flee secretly into Judea (Mark 9: 30; 10: 1), Jesus seems to have grown increasingly tense as he drew near to what he regarded as his zero hour of danger (Mark 10: 32). From time to time one or other of the disciples would sound him as to the possibility of making open declaration of his Messiahship (Mark 10: 35-39, 41), but he shook them off with an abruptness which, to them, was very puzzling, indeed.

Even when the festal crowds showered him with honors and greeted him as popular prophet, as he took his disciples into the Holy City for the first time, he refused to be stampeded by their urgent appeals. The Twelve watched in vain for the first sign that he was yielding to the loyalist hopes of the Jewish public (Mark 11: 8-11; Matthew 21: 10-11). Indeed, one account has it that he actually wept tears of bitter regret over his first glimpse of the Capitol, as he seemed to feel instinctively how impossible was the task which he had set himself—that of turning the thousands of pilgrims away from interest in mere festal rites

to the weightier matters of the Kingdom (Luke 19: 41-42).

His succeeding visits to the Temple resulted in so estranging the Jewish officials, that he began immediately to take precautions to preserve his life against secret assault. But his public attacks against the Pharisees and the Sadducees were continued, from day to day, with ever-increasing severity. Evidently, like Amos and Elijah before him, he was in no mood either to seek or to give quarter to those who, in his estimation, were transgressing against the plain will of Heaven. For priest and scribe alike ignored all talk of the coming of a heavenly Kingdom, and sought to satisfy their lives and those of the multitudes of pliant worshippers with the details of a meaningless mass of ritual and empty pomp (Mark 11: 15-19, 27-33; 12: 1-5, 9, 12; Matthew 21: 28-32).

They cleverly distorted Jesus' admission that, under the present circumstances, it was both necessary and wise to pay taxes levied by the Roman authorities. They capitalized his bold attack upon the Davidic conception of the Messiahship, thus further isolating him from the various elements in the pilgrim crowds, and

putting him in a position where he appeared to be planning an anti-Roman coup of his own (Mark 12: 13-17[b], 35-37). Somebody seems also to have revealed the fact that Jesus regarded the Holy City as doomed to destruction if it persisted in its present attitude of antagonism toward the Roman government (Mark 13: 1-2). Temple authorities were not slow to utilize this bit of welcome news to gain the co-operation of the Procurator against the Prophet.

Later church circles felt certain that Jesus must have foreseen every detail of his closing career, and that he forewarned his disciples as to what they might expect. No fact is more clear, however, than that the early sources reveal the utter surprise of both Jesus and his friends at the course which events did finally take. Aware only that the net was being drawn ever more tightly about him, and taking such precautions against assassination as he was able (Luke 22: 35-36, 38), he seems to have found refuge for his harrowed feelings in his faith that God, having all power, could turn even the dark night of death and his own defeat into early victory for the Kingdom that was to come.

His struggles to reconcile himself to what now

appeared to him the inevitable fate of the faithful prophet, led him to spend even his rest hours in secret prayer. Little did the disciples appreciate the agony of soul through which he passed (Mark 14: 32-37, 39-41[b]). He yearned and waited in vain for them to offer him that understanding fellowship for which he had chosen them in the beginning. Alone, therefore, with God his Father, and with his own aching conscience—alone, while the world slept in ignorance and indifference to his tragic fate, Jesus waited stoically for the stroke of doom.

It must have been a tremendous relief when, like John, he was captured at his place of prayer (Mark 14: 41[c], 42-49[a], 50-51). He gathered composure and fortitude under the heartless grilling to which he was subjected by the hastily summoned members of the Sanhedrin. And facing Pilate under the trumped-up charge of attempt at insurrection, he stood like a man of iron. In neither court, however, did he offer any defense for himself, refusing to say so much as a word in reply. For well did he know how utterly absurd were the insulting charges preferred against him (Mark 14: 53-61[a], 63-64; 15: 1, 4-5).

When finally his fate was sealed, and he was

forced to walk with bruised and bleeding body along the streets of his beloved city to the place of crucifixion, he carried himself like a hero, his manly bearing winning for him the hearty commendation of the very Captain who supervised the last cruel rites of the Roman death (Mark 15: 39; Luke 23: 47)!

So passed into history the man whom the tardy world would some day learn to honor. But the Man of Galilee has not even yet come fully into his own. He himself would never approve of the early deification which was accorded to him, in rivalry with other dying and victorious Saviors. Like the real man of ideals that he was, he would count it far greater tribute to be remembered, not in flattering phrases and servile prayers for mercy, but in the spread over the earth of that spirit of helpfulness and brotherhood and joyous peace for which he so willingly lay down his life.

CHAPTER X

VICTORY IN DEFEAT

JESUS was dead, and buried! The news spread like wildfire throughout the Galilean groups of pilgrims in Jerusalem, causing amazement, sorrow, and bitter resentment in their hearts. For they loved their Northern prophet. And many of them had hoped that he would yet declare himself Messianic King and sweep the Romans from the land (Luke 24:21). Why did he not appeal to them and let them save him from the hand of his enemies and theirs? What a wonderful King he would have made! And how surely he could have saved his people from their ignominy if he had listened to sane advice! But it was too late. They must now wait for Another. But when would *he* come?

The news of the tragedy fairly stunned Galilee. His friends might there be counted by the thousands. No one else had ever been so interested in them. Everybody spoke of his kind deeds, and of his wonderful addresses. Galilee could never

forget its own prophet. Even Nazareth repented its hasty action against him on that never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath when he appealed so splendidly for their confidence and understanding. But how did they know that his life would be cut short in this terrible fashion!

The family of Jesus was broken-hearted. Mary was inconsolable. James could never forgive himself for his baseless suspicions against his own brother. Such a heroic death, even in spite of its horrors! For days and days the younger brother betook himself to prayer, and somehow the memories of Jesus' deeds and reported teachings took on new meaning. They were not so heretical, after all, as the scribes had insisted. Perhaps the family had misunderstood Jesus. They had loved him, they had meant well in opposing him. They never dreamed he could refuse their request to return home with them. If only he had done so! He would now be with them as of old, so happy and thoughtful. How great a place he had filled in the little home! Everything spoke of Jesus. Day and night, awake and dreaming, James could think only of Jesus, and of his own unbrotherly attitude toward the beloved dead!

And the Twelve—what had happened to them

and their little group of faithful co-workers? Judas had hanged himself in shameful remorse, when he found that his treachery had really placed Jesus' life in jeopardy. Bitterly, bitterly did he repent his hasty act. He had loved Jesus as much as any of the disciples did. He had counted so heavily upon Jesus' ultimate announcement of himself as messianic Leader of the Revolution! Jesus' policy of inaction had so disappointed him, maddened him, driven him to desperate action! Oh, why had he betrayed his Master's place of prayer? How could he have carried the terrible act so far as to place the kiss of betrayal upon the honest cheek of the man who had meant most to him, for whom he would gladly have died in the cause of freedom! Now it was too late. Pilate had been afraid to let Jesus go, and the hierarchy had been adamant in its determination to put him to death. Too late! What use of living longer? The murderous cries of the hostile mob maddened him! By this time they were crucifying Jesus! Better death with his Master, than live to be tormented with the awful memory—to be called upon to explain the horrible deed he had committed! But would the world understand that his death was his greatest

tribute to Jesus' name—a last futile effort to atone for a terrible wrong? (Matthew 27.)

The other eleven disciples fled precipitately toward Galilee, overwhelmed by the sudden change in the situation, and absolutely unprepared for anything like this ending of their plans. Probably taking the most direct route through Samaria, and worn out with the anxieties and excitement of the past few days, they hurried as fast as their wearied limbs could carry them toward Capernaum. Their one immediate aim was to save their own lives. They had no time and no desire to lay plans for their future. Nothing but darkness surrounded them, no ray of hope lighted their pathway. Jesus was dead—dead! *That* was the one appalling fact that stared them in the face. And their hearts seemed to die with him! (Mark 16:7.) Strangers' hands would bury the beloved form they were obliged to leave behind. Only a few of their Galilean women remained in Jerusalem to pay the last respects, if there was anything they might be allowed to do for the Master. (Mark 16:1.)

Peter, in particular, grieved over Jesus' death as if his heart would break. After all his protestations of loyalty, and with Jesus' warnings ringing

in his ears cautioning him that he must be ready for the severest kinds of temptation, he had again and again played false in the turmoil of those last frightful hours in Jerusalem. He was by no means a natural coward. And, if Jesus had allowed, he would have fought the Temple guard when they surrounded the Teacher at Olivet. But his mind had been in a whirl, he hardly knew what he was doing or saying. And events moved so swiftly! Oh, if he had died with Jesus in the garden, or *even on a Roman cross!* Anything but this dark night of sorrow. The memory of his cowardice in the court-room hung over him like a pall. Jesus' last pathetic looks cut him like a knife. Could he ever, in any way, atone for his failure to stand by Jesus to the death? (Mark 14: 63-72.)

Meanwhile, in the Holy City, Pilate was smiling sardonically whenever the stoical face of Jesus flashed back into his memory. The Procurator had few compunctions for any such official act of his. It meant little to him that another life had been snuffed out, especially that of some obscure Jew! And over in the Temple courts there was a great feeling of relief. Priest and scribe congratulated each other that another uprising

of the people had been forestalled. The Temple ceremonies went on in routine fashion, and no heart of them all was moved at the thought of Jesus. But Jerusalem was not destined to forget him so easily. The dead came back—if not in one way, then in another—to plague them, and to arouse consciences supposedly lulled to sleep!

The writer of the Gospel of John was right. Light suddenly dawned: at first, just a prick of light, then it grew and glowed until, in the white blaze of full day *Jesus stood forth in the consciences of men.* And his vivid, burning Presence changed men's views of life, gave them renewed hope, dispersed their darkness, bent their wills to new purposes. That Light has not yet been quenched, almost nineteen hundred years after the Gospel writer first made the same observation (John 1:4-5).

What *really* happened? *Did* angels appear, and literal voices ring through the ether? Did phenomenal darkness and an earthquake occur, a crucified body come back to life, and then rise to a Jewish heaven? Let those think so who must. But what *did* probably occur—then, as it does to-day, and in every age where human con-

sciences are at work? THIS, first of all: Peter had a startling dream, as he seems to have been in the habit of doing when he was unusually excited (Galatians 2: 11-14; Acts 10: 1-28). It may have taken the form of a dream such as the one recorded in John 21: 1-17, centering around the thoughts of his faithlessness to Jesus in the courtroom, and around the remembrance that Jesus had particularly counted upon *him,* "the Rock," to continue the work in case anything serious did befall himself.

All the way back to Galilee, in that sleepless, hectic flight, one thing stood out in Peter's experience even more vividly than the fear that they might be followed and captured; that was the burning memory of his repeated denials that he was a friend of Jesus! How many times had the Teacher sought to make sure of their loyalty both to himself personally and also to his ideals. And with what self-assurance and boastfulness had Peter declared his unswerving fealty to this man whom, of all men, he most honored and revered. And now, at the first breath of testing, he had shamefully disgraced himself and played false to the one he swore to follow to the death!

With this oft-recurring dialogue of promises

and rebukes ringing in his ears, Peter could find no solution for the dilemma into which he had plunged. Regret carried him nowhere. Further pledges were of no avail, for the deed was done; the Master was dead! When he tried to convince himself that he really did love Jesus, his failure made him doubt his own integrity. There seemed to be no possible atonement for such a coward as he had shown himself to be.

Then, somehow, through the mazes of his troubled sleep he found himself again in the little fishing-boat upon familiar Lake Galilee, and in the early morning hours he and his friends were vainly trying to fill their nets with the usual night's catch. But neither luck nor skill availed. Not until they heeded the advice of a stranger on the shore did they succeed, and then the unprecedented haul startled them. Peter heard John's delighted voice cry out, "Why, that's *Jesus* who has brought us this luck!"

Then events seem to crowd in rapidly upon one another. Peter plunges through the water as he has never before swum; he stands once again in the presence of the beloved form of his Prophet-friend, no longer broken-hearted and ashamed, but with the old-time loyalty in his eyes and con-

fident of the forgiveness and friendship of Jesus. A superhuman strength surges through Peter's veins; something tells him he can make amends for his past conduct. But the familiar voice keeps searching his heart with the rebuking words he had already heard so many times since that awful day in Jerusalem: "Do you really *care* for Me?"

How weak and unconvincing his protests of loyalty now seem! Even Jesus does not seem satisfied with such hesitating statements. But finally the opportunity is once again laid before him to dedicate the rest of his life in service to those for whom Jesus had spent himself. He accepts this commission with intense eagerness and relief; all his future seems clearly mapped out for him. Even death in such a cause, with Jesus' confidence back of him and a chance to prove the depths of his own devotion, appears to be alluring— And then he awakes to find Jesus gone, and all of this vivid scene a dream!

But that sacred voice stayed with him, ringing in his ears. His protestations of love and loyalty were repeated with ever more intense assertiveness. Somehow that *Presence* seemed to stay with him, day and night. And the Conviction was gradually changed into the gold of Reality, as he

began to live once again for the old Cause—but in the new spirit of enthusiasm which no experience could ever again dim or drown. And *that* was the real resurrection of Faith! Peter had finally deserved the name which Jesus had given him. On that bed-rock a mighty faith was to be built. *If* it remained loyal to the spirit of Jesus down through the ages, even the very gates of hell could not prevail against it!

We certainly cannot blame Peter for using the psychology current at that time, and for believing that he had actually witnessed the living presence of Jesus, in bodily form. Nor can we wonder if Jesus' "risen body" soon became identified with that of the glorious Son of Man whose coming from heaven Jesus had often described in such glowing language. The one thing which is of tremendous importance to all times is that Peter accepted the challenge of his conscience, and that he spent the rest of his life carrying out the wishes of Jesus as if under the very eyes of the Master himself. Had he not had this remarkable experience, and placed some such literal interpretation upon it, it is more than likely that the movement started so simply yet enthusiastically by Jesus would have died out in time. For where

was there a man in all the circle of Jesus' friends who could have led the work forward as successfully as did Peter?

There is just one more remote possibility (I Corinthians 15:5-8). James, the brother of Jesus, finally awoke to a realization of the new part he must play if he hoped to make amends for his harsh conduct toward Jesus. Probably he, too, believed he saw Jesus standing again in the flesh and pleading with him to take some worthy part in the work which the crucifixion had interrupted.

For, after the shocking news of Jesus' fate reached Nazareth, any bitterness which James and the rest of the family may have felt toward the wayward son and brother must have disappeared before the newly awakened love which now reasserted itself in all of their lives. Mary's mother-love and that of the sisters may have had some softening influence upon James' otherwise stern nature. It was not easy, probably, for his conservative and unbending spirit to yield ground before the memory of one who had "done despite to the holy Law of the Lord." But the disturbing news that Peter and his friends, over in Capernaum, had actually had glimpses of the

risen Jesus and had received assurances from Jesus so that there could be no possible doubt of his identity or of his existence in the upper realm of the living, very likely prepared James for the crucial experience which changed his whole career and character.

Paul (I Corinthians 15:7) is authority for the fact that James also experienced a "vision," in which the younger brother saw Jesus alive and was persuaded that he had somehow received recognition from Heaven as the expected Messiah. It is evident that James believed he also had received from Jesus a very definite commission to help the disciples carry on the work which his brother had been obliged to give up because of the hostility encountered in Jerusalem.

There can be no question but that James felt greatly chagrined and humbled over the supposed discovery of his brother's true nature. Doubtless many a forgotten incident was recalled which, in the light of his present belief, confirmed this conviction. There must have been stirring times in the Nazareth home when James convinced Mary and the rest that his vision was truly authentic. To them, this was the only family on earth which had been honored with the presence

of Heaven's chosen leader. Here he had been in their midst these thirty-five years, and they had never even guessed the secret of his wonderful purity and thoughtfulness! Nothing henceforth could shake their faith in the validity of these repeated visions of this, their new Lord—once a son and brother!

But while James did accept this burden in his ascetic fashion, letting his own orthodox Jewish conceptions serve as his guide rather than the more emancipated principles of his brother, it seems more than likely that he would never have done much by himself had not Peter and the others led in the rejuvenation of the movement. It was upon Peter's work that all of the other earlier leaders built their superstructure. Each played a worthy part, Paul in particular. But to the man whom Jesus rightly named "The Rock" should go the chief honor of starting again the Faith which, a few years later, came to be known as "Christianity" (Matthew 16:18; Acts 11:26). Paul enjoys the honor of converting "Jewish Christianity" into a universal faith, capable henceforth of adapting itself to any country or people, and of absorbing elements of

strength from cultural movements of many varied types.

Like a great continental river, Christianity has wound in and out among the civilizations of nineteen centuries. Its impact upon peoples has doubtless been far more marked than that of any other religion, for good and for ill. It has carried blessing and enlightenment to many millions of people in most countries of the earth. Many times it has been the refuge of politicians and tyrants who have sought to use its name to further their own selfish ambitions. It has left behind the countless deposits of its ancient customs and beliefs, retaining enough of creed and rite to satisfy the cultural needs of many kinds of folk. It has caught up into the ever-changing stream of its life many beliefs, ceremonies, and even the gods, of other religions. Judging from its history and from its present strength, it appears to have many centuries of progress yet to run. It will change even more rapidly in coming generations than in the past, as science and social thought gain increasing power in its councils.

Has the Galilean won? Could he ever have guessed whither his movement would tend?

Would he approve very much that has been taught in his name, or that has gone on under the spell of his influence? To what extent have *his main ideas* been carried out—Love and Brotherhood; the spirit of Service before the spirit of selfish gain; devotion to the masterful will of the Highest; human co-operation to create a world of friendliness and harmony; and Religion as the stern ethicizing of one's daily conduct, to fit one for the carrying out of these other ideals just mentioned?

Jesus will "come into his own" when the world learns, through the church scholars, how thoroughly human and virile he was in the days of his flesh. And that world will enshrine him in the only Temple where he would have wished to be honored—the Temple of the grateful human breast—when it really learns how closely he lived to its needs and how truly he believed in its divine possibilities.

The Temple authorities and the Roman Procurator would rub their eyes in unbelieving astonishment if they could see what a universal place Jesus is making for himself in the hearts of men. Is it because he was deified, transformed into a miracle-worker, and made to have his

origin in Heaven? All that first-century, oriental coloring undoubtedly played an important part in making Jesus known to the world. The myths and wonders associated with his name caught the child-imagination of the uneducated generations, and still appeal wherever men are encouraged to think unscientifically and with no historical perspective to guide their thought.

But anyone who attempts to read history with open eyes must see that all of these ancient forms of thought are fast fading from the picture. They are as certainly doomed to extinction as is the clinging mediævalism of the reactionary portion of the Christian Church. Jesus fought the battles of all humanity when he himself broke the shackles of traditionalism within Judaism. His unfailing insistence that men judge themselves by the plain ethical standards of the great prophets —and that means by the most practical human experience—set a goal for all succeeding generations to follow.

Jesus will live down through the years in the grateful memories of increasing millions because he was *a man,* not a God. Because of his personal struggles for truth and justice, not on account of his supposed miracles and revelations

from heaven. It is his will to find the noblest ways of living that intrigues us. His faith that all men, even those of weakened wills and unfortunate inheritance, may rise by the sheer determination to conquer themselves and their environment puts victory into the human blood. And we do not hesitate to proclaim him the Brother and the Leader of mankind, in spite of the fact that he was born a Jew, a peasant, and had not the learning of the schools to commend him to the thinking people of the world.

Love taught him more than ever the schools could yield. Love for God kept him at his purest and best. Love for men kept his nature sweet and eminently practical. He sought to bring in a Kingdom which was far more wonderful than he could possibly imagine. *That* Kingdom of world-understanding is coming. Not to-day or to-morrow, as he fondly hoped, but just as rapidly as men learn that Life may be good, and must be co-operative. Call him no longer Prince of Peace, for he cared nothing whatever for the plaudits of royalty. Call him the Friend and Brother of man, for that place he filled, and is destined to fill for ages to come.

APPENDIX

THE PORTRAIT IN THE EARLIEST GOSPEL SOURCES

How shall one know which of the Gospel sources yield the most dependable portrait of the historic Jesus? As New Testament scholars have long since pointed out, simplicity, abruptness, and unstudied frankness are among the distinguishing marks of the early sources. As soon as labored arguments, detailed explanations, and over-anxious corrections appear in the documents, one is made aware that later hands are beginning to show their work.

It is now a well-known fact that the earliest documents came from the hands of Aramaic-speaking friends of Jesus, probably from the circles which felt the immediate impact of his own splendid life. Even though these men wrote late in life, say 60-70 A.D., they could not possibly be expected to forecast the problems and perplexities of later times. Much less would they be likely to deal with their impressions of Jesus' life and teaching from the angle of those who came into the Church from a distinctly non-Jewish background. These first-generation constituent disciples would be dominated, in their thought, by burning memories of the actual character of Jesus which

they had known more or less intimately. It would be difficult for them to depart very radically from the eye-witness evidence which formed the groundwork of their gospel—and that meant their very life.

When one takes the time and trouble to mark the gospel sources in some good English or Greek harmony of the gospels, checking document against document, phrase against phrase, and even word against word, with meticulous care, it very soon becomes evident with what frequency later ecclesiastical hands enlarged upon the picture so simply given in the earlier writings. Evidence of the late-century persecutions appears; and Jesus' Palestinian stories are gradually adapted to the needs of the newer disciples in the Græco-Roman world. Jesus himself is gradually made over to fit the Hellenistic thought of the new churchmen. His simple healing-experiences are again and again enlarged upon; new wonders are added from contemporary examples; and he is soon found speaking in the imagery of later generations as if he were quite at home with the language of Greek philosophy, Philo's terminology, or the colorful imagery of the Mystery faiths of Asia Minor and Europe!

Jesus must be kept strictly to his Palestinian environment, unless it can be shown with reason that he fell under the spell of the outside faiths. And this has by no means been demonstrated as yet. He could

not possibly talk in terms of Hellenistic eschatology, as Paul could. Mansions in the sky were to him as unthinkable as were the trinitarian symbols of the Roman church. The Lower World, where dwelt the waiting spirits of his Jewish fathers, was all the Paradise that he cared to anticipate; and resurrection with his beloved dead to the earthly environs of the future Palestine was sufficient heaven for all his ambitions. Like the narcissus, upon which he loved to meditate, his faith sprang from the none too attractive soil of his people's faith. The marvel is that, like the great ethical prophets before him, he built a religion which should so remarkably fit the many generations to come.

No two students of the gospels will agree in detail as to the lines of division between early and later sources. The following arrangement is presented with openness of mind, yet with considerable conviction, as the product of many years of conscientious source-study, to enable the beginner to distinguish the types of material which may, with reason, be assigned to the earlier and later hands. If the culling process seems, at first glance, somewhat drastic, and the amount of material placed under the caption "Editorial Appreciations and Corrections of Later Years" (pp. 252-270) seems unduly large, the present writer can simply reiterate his growing conviction that future scholarship will undoubtedly carry this

eliminating process still farther. In the clearer light now thrown upon Jesus' Jewish environment, and with the evident limitation of experience which was his made more sure, the careful reader can readily see with the use of this outline how many and varied were the additions which church leaders felt obliged to place in these documents in order to make them understood by successive decades of Christian disciples.

For convenience, the materials listed as fairly reliable for a historic picture of Jesus are grouped according to location in the gospels (pp. 214-252). The paraphrases are designed to show, in plain everyday language, *just what Jesus meant* his hearers to infer from his teaching; or what, for instance, the *early Markan author probably meant* to say before his simple book was enlarged by later times. In not a few cases the reader will note the fact that even these earliest Christian writers have a tendency to adapt Jesus' simple thought (of 29-30 A.D.) to the mentality of their own generation (60-70 A.D.). An attempt is made to restore the historical setting. It is Jesus' own convictions and actions that we seek to restore in all their vividness. The italicized references point out some of the more striking and original statements referred to Jesus and his commentators.

This outline has grown out of many years of college class work. It can readily be used by instructors

in college, church or club classes to verify the findings given in the book to which it is attached. In this way the students can quickly be shown how to make source-experiments for themselves, being guided in their judgment as they attempt to make clear for themselves the probable outlines of the career of the most influential man of all history.

OUTLINE OF SYNOPTIC PASSAGES

Reflecting

I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JESUS' LIFE:

1. The Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:4-6. John's startling and popular messianic movement.

Mark 1:7-8. The coming of the heavenly Son of Man.

Mark 1:9-11. Jesus' hearty dedication to the movement.

Mark 1:12-13[a]. Jesus faces his problems thoughtfully and reverently.

Mark 1:14. John's sudden arrest by Herod Antipas. Jesus flees to Galilee, and openly continues John's work.

Mark 1:16-20. In Capernaum, four fishermen join him as disciples.

Mark 1:21-22, 27[a, b], 28-34[a]. Jesus becomes famous as an eloquent preacher and healer of diseases.

Mark 1:35-39[a]. He leaves the city to avoid miracle-fame, and to urge his message upon his Galilean people.

Mark 1: 40-41[a], 44[c]. He encourages a former leper to return home.

Mark 2: 1-5, 11-12. He encourages a paralyzed man to recover the use of his limbs.

Mark 2: 13-17. He defends customs clerks against social ostracism.

Mark 2: 18-19, 21-22. He rejects the rite of fasting as interfering with the natural, happy conception of religion.

Mark 2: 23-27[b]. He places human necessity before perfunctory Sabbath-keeping.

Mark 3: 1-6, 7[a]. He encourages a man to recover the use of a helpless hand.

Mark 3: 13-14, 16-19. He selects eight more helpers for his work.

Mark 3: 22-30. Hostile scribes from Jerusalem accuse Jesus of being insane. He defends himself warmly.

Mark 3: 19[b]-21, 31-35. Jesus' mother and brothers are persuaded of his insanity, and come to force him to return to Nazareth. The sad break with his family.

Mark 4: 1-2[a]. He finds some relief in the loyalty and interest of his crowds of listeners.

Mark 4: 35-39[a, c], 40. His fearless courage in a lake storm.

Mark 5: 1-6, 7[b]-8, 18-20. Jesus restores an insane man to his right mind.

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. He saves a Synagogue-President's little girl from being buried alive.

Mark 6:1-4, 6. Jesus fails to win Nazareth, and his own people, to have faith in his work.

Mark 6:6[b], 7[a]. He tries to assuage his bitter disappointment by organizing a preaching-tour of the Galilean villages for his disciples and himself.

Mark 6:12, 14, 17-29. Herod is alarmed by this new activity, fearing another dangerous movement like that of John.

Mark 6:30-34, 45-46, 53-54. Jesus' patience and affection for the crowds of people who refuse to give him any privacy or rest.

Mark 7:1-2, 5-9. Another clash with the Pharisees, led by the scribes from Jerusalem, over the place of sacred washings in religion.

Mark 7:24-27[a], 29[a], 30. His secret flight into far-away Phœnicia, to escape the Herodian police. He helps restore a little Syrian girl to sanity.

Mark 7:31, 32-37. His cautious return to the upper-lake region. He helps a deaf and dumb man to recover his powers.

Mark 8:1-8[a], 9[b]-10. His consideration for the crowds that clung to him.

Mark 8:11-15. The Pharisees heckle him over his right to teach the people.

Mark 8:22-26. Jesus helps a blind man to recover his sight.

Mark 8: 27—9: 1. He severely rebukes the Twelve for planning an anti-Roman revolution, expressing horror at being mentioned as a possible leader of such a bloody movement. His confidence that *God* will lead the Jewish people to liberty and happiness.

Mark 9: 2, 8, 30-32; 10: 1. His secret preparations for departure from Galilee; the night journey through Galilee, toward Jerusalem; and renewed attempts to persuade the disciples that he was right in avoiding a revolution.

Mark 9: 33-36; 10: 13-16. His impatience with the Twelve for dreaming of political glory.

Mark 9: 38-40. His utter freedom from jealousy over rivals in religious work.

Mark 10: 2-12. His stern defense of monogamy and the purity of the home.

Mark 10: 17-30[a]. The pressing necessity for giving up wealth and all, to prepare for the imminent reign of God.

Mark 10: 32-34. His certainty that the carrying out of his plans would result in his death.

Mark 10: 35-45. The disciples scheme and quarrel over their political ambitions. Jesus' stern rebuke, and plea for the kindly spirit of service.

Mark 11: 1-11. Jesus greeted as popular hero and prophet as he ascends to Jerusalem, but he re-

mains utterly unmoved by the clamor for a political gesture.

Mark 11:12-14[a]. He grieves over the unresponsiveness, the fruitlessness, of his Jewish people.

Mark 11:15-19. His high-handed purification of the Temple courts.

Mark 11:27-33. His Sadducean opponents again question his right to address the Temple crowds.

Mark 12:1-5, 9, 12. He declares them in opposition to God, predicts the overthrow of the Holy City, and arouses their undying wrath against himself.

Mark 12:13-17. He parries the treacherous questions of the Pharisees and Herodians as to paying Roman taxes.

Mark 12:35-37. He shows the folly of looking for a political leader of Davidic descent.

Mark 12:38-40. He becomes more and more popular as he openly pokes fun at the pretentious piety of the scribes.

Mark 13:1-2. Privately he tells the disciples that the Temple itself will soon be torn down (if the authorities do not change their ways).

Mark 13:5, 6[a, c], 9, 11-13, 21-23, 28-32[a, c]. He warns them against severe temptations and troubles yet to befall his nation before deliverance comes.

Mark 14:1-2, 10-11. Plots of the hierarchy and of Judas against Jesus' life.

Mark 14:12[a, c]-17. Jesus' secret preparations for eating the Passover meal.

Mark 14: 18-25. He warns them of treachery which he has discovered in their midst, in the very presence of Judas.

Mark 14: 26-27, 29-30[a], 31. He warns them that a severe test of their loyalty is at hand.

Mark 14: 32-41[a]. The lonesome struggle in the Garden.

Mark 14: 41[b]-49[a], 50-52. The Temple mob, guided by Judas, surprises and captures Jesus. The Twelve flee for their lives. John Mark (?) barely escapes capture.

Mark 14: 53-61[a], 63-65. The mock trial before the hastily awakened Sanhedrin.

Mark 14: 66-72. Peter's courage turns to cowardice and denial, as he sees the hopelessness of Jesus' situation.

Mark 15: 1-2[a], 3-15, 16-32, 34[a], 37[b], 39-41, 42-47. Pilate's farcical examination of Jesus, and the tragic end of a heroic and wonderful life.

Mark 16: 1-8. One of several dream-visions experienced by Jesus' friends (Mary of Magdala?) after his death.

2. Parallel Passages in Luke-Matthew

Luke 3: 7-9. Matthew 3: 7-10. John's bold denunciation of ecclesiastical pride and pomp. He pronounces divine judgment upon them.

Luke 3: 16[d]-17. Matthew 3: 11[d]-12. The terrible test

awaiting the Jewish people at the coming of the Son of Man.

Luke 3:19-20. Matthew 14:3-4. John's imprisonment by Herod Antipas.

Luke 6:20-23. Matthew 5:1-12. Courage and faithfulness will bring great rewards.

Luke 7:1-10. Matthew 8:5-13. The wonderful religious faith of a Roman Captain.

Luke 7:18-20[a], 22-28[a]. Matthew 11:2-3[a], 4-11[a]. Jesus' remarkable friendship for John.

Luke 9:57-60[a]. Matthew 8:19-22. The severity of Jesus' requirements for discipleship.

Luke 11:2[b]-4. Matthew 6:9-13[a]. The secret of Jesus' power.

Luke 11:39-42. Matthew 23:25, 26, 23. His strenuous emphasis upon inner religion as far superior to the keeping of mere traditions.

Luke 12:51. Matthew 10:34. Jesus realizes that, because of his passion for sheer honesty in religion, he is destined to arouse bitter differences of opinion.

3. The Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:80; 2:40. The sturdy, pious upbringing of John and Jesus.

Luke 1:26[b]; 2:39[b]. Nazareth of Galilee was the home of Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus.

Luke 2:41-52. Jesus' early interest in things religious.

Luke 3: 1-2, 3[a]. Roman influence dominant in all Palestine in the days of John and Jesus.

Luke 3: 10-15. Roman soldiery, gathered from many provinces under Roman control, and numerous Jewish and foreign tax-gatherers in Roman employ, mingled with the audiences addressed by John and Jesus.

Luke 3: 23[a, b]. Jesus still a young man during his public ministry.

Luke 4: 14. He was a youth full of vigor, enthusiasm, and with a rich religious experience behind him, when he began work in Galilee.

Luke 4: 16-22[a]. A passion for kindly helpfulness dominated his every thought. The liberation of his Jewish people was to be the climax to all this enthusiastic campaign of character-building and loyalty to God.

Luke 5: 1-3, 10[b]-11. Jesus' friendly familiarity with the Capernaum fishermen who became his devoted followers.

Luke 7: 36-50. Jesus took every possible social opportunity to explain his work, even when his opponents sought to take advantage of his good nature.

Luke 8: 1-3. A band of appreciative Galilean women took the lead in raising funds and supplies to help Jesus and his disciples carry on their campaign.

Luke 9:60[b]-62. Jesus selected his followers with severe tests, rejecting all who lacked physical and moral courage.

Luke 12:49-50. Facing inevitable opposition and probable death, Jesus often wished the crucial zero hour were at hand.

Luke 13:31-33. Jesus sends a mocking good-by to King Herod, as he proceeds to carry his plans through to the bitter end.

Luke 13:34-35. His pathetic grief over the hard-heartedness of official Judaism at Jerusalem.

Luke 19:1-10. Jesus' public defense of the penitent customs officer of Jericho.

Luke 24:11. After Jesus' death the friends of the Master found it difficult to believe that he had come back to life.

Luke 24:19[c], 21[a]. They still thought of him as their wonderful *Prophet.* Their only sorrow was that he had not lived to set them free from Roman domination.

Luke 24:34[b]. By common consent, Peter seems to have had the first "vision" of Jesus after the crucifixion.

Luke 24:45-46. Gradually it dawned upon the circle of Jesus' friends that, after all, the Sacred Scriptures really had for centuries contained the clear prediction of Jesus' mission, including his death and his ultimate resurrection.

4. The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 2:23. Jesus was reared in Nazareth.

Matthew 4:13. He resided in Nazareth until the beginning of his public ministry.

Matthew 15:12-14[a]. In his thorough disgust with the Pharisaic leaders, Jesus cared little whether he offended them or not.

Matthew 28:16[a]. After the crucifixion, the Eleven returned to Galilee.

Matthew 28:17[b]. The disciples were with difficultv persuaded that Jesus had come back to life.

II. JESUS' OWN RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS:

1. The Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:15[b, c]. If the Jewish people will purify their lives in readiness, God will shortly intervene on behalf of their liberty.

Mark 1:17. Come, let me show you how to get men ready for the coming Kingdom.

Mark 1:38. I do not seek the fame of a Healer. My task is to prepare lives for God's reign.

Mark 2:5. A repentant heart may always count upon God's full forgiveness.

Mark 2:11. Confidence in the God-given powers of your body and mind can restore you to full health.

Mark 2:17. I count it my highest honor to work, not for the so-called "pious" folk, but for the unfortunates whom you despise as "the dregs of society." They need me, and frankly own it.

Mark 2:19, 21-22. We are so very happy in our thrilling work that all of our time and energy are required in helping others. We have no time for such worn-out customs as fasting. Ours is a living, growing faith, ever new and inspiring.

Mark 2:25-26. Humanity first! Religious rites are distinctly of secondary value.

Mark 2:27. God meant the Sabbath to minister to man's highest good. When it becomes an end in itself, it becomes worse than useless!

Mark 3:4. The Sabbath gives opportunity for extra service for those in need.

Mark 3:23-27. How can I be serving the Devil when I am making men's lives better? Judge from my *success* how far I am from being "divided" in my loyalty to God.

Mark 3:28-29. Let me warn *you* that while God's mercy is wonderfully generous, any life which deliberately refuses to follow the light of truth, seals its own dire fate, forever!

Mark 3:33-35. When *my own family* forsake me because I try to obey the voice of God, then I must ask you who put the divine will first, to make up for my loss with your warm-hearted fellowship!

Mark 4: 3-9. Not every life responds to the wonderful appeal of God. But those who do, find real happiness.

Mark 4: 21. Have you found some new truth? Pass it on to others who need it.

Mark 4: 24[a]. Be exceedingly careful what truth you take into your life.

Mark 4: 24[b]-25. You will develop most by sharing generously with others the truth which you possess.

Mark 4: 26-29. What a wonderful thing religious growth really is! Now a bit of truth; then a beautiful harvest of character. It is all the marvelous work of God!

Mark 4: 30-32. Does our work seem discouraging and slow? Think rather what such a message as ours can ultimately do for the world!

Mark 4: 39-40. Never, never lose faith in the Power that guides our destinies—even in face of death itself!

Mark 5: 19. You owe it to your friends, to tell them how good God has been to you.

Mark 5: 34. The use of your God-given powers has led you back to health.

Mark 6: 4. To think that strangers honor me for my sincere message, but *my own kin* will have nothing to do with me!

Mark 6: 10-11. Always conduct your work with be-

coming simplicity, modesty, and yet with dignity and self-respect.

Mark 6:34. Poor misguided folk! How much they need intelligent leadership.

Mark 7:6-9. You are so set on keeping your petty man-made rites that you have no taste for real religion at all! Shall *God's* wishes take second place in your thoughts?

Mark 7:14-15. Ritual washings do not guarantee a man's purity of life, but the cherishing of clean thoughts within his heart.

Mark 8:12. If your hearts were open to the truth, you would not need miracle-proof or any other authority to convince you that what I say is right.

Mark 8:15. Above all things, I beg of you, avoid the quibbling spirit of the scribes and the mercenary spirit of the Herodians.

Mark 8:30, 33. You must never, under any circumstances, think of me as a leader of insurrection against Rome! The *Devil* put *that* thought into your minds. *God* has something far better in store for us.

Mark 8:34-37. Henceforth, every follower of mine must join me in thrusting everything out of his life but one all-consuming purpose: the hastening of God's rule in the earth! This is the greatest mission in the world!

Mark 9:1. You think I am dreaming? Some of

you men, right here, will live to see that glorious Day!

Mark 9:23, 29. Why doubt your powers? Confidence in God, and the tremendous will-power of man, can accomplish wonders!

Mark 9:35-36; 10:15. The spirit of trustful love and cheerful service is the mark of true greatness.

Mark 9:39-40. I am jealous of no man who is serving humanity; he is my friend and brother.

Mark 9:42. Any man who stands in the way of the moral development of a little child (is deserving of the most drastic kind of punishment) should be sunk in the depths of the sea.

Mark 9:43, 45, 47, 48. Make sure that you are ready for the coming Kingdom, even if it costs you everything dear to your life.

Mark 9:49, 50. Remember, we shall all be put to the extreme test. We can make good, if we will. But it is an awful thing to fail in the Judgment Day!

Mark 10:5-9, 11-12. Divorce is a concession to human frailty, and represents indifference to the higher interests of life. Nothing on earth should be allowed to sever the most sacred bond in human experience! To play lightly with the marriage tie, is to take the first step toward common adultery.

Mark 10:14-15. Don't drive the boys and girls away! We have much to learn from their trustful, happy ways. Would that we were all as near the ideal of God's Kingdom as they are!

Mark 10:18. Your flattering words are well-meant, my friend, but none of us is really *"good." God alone* represents that supreme purity which we *should* all possess.

Mark 10:19, 21. Yours has been a formal sort of religion, hasn't it? But are you willing to place preparation for the Kingdom *first* in your life—even if it means laying aside your great wealth to accomplish your new purpose?

Mark 10:23-27. There is something subtle and alluring in the possession of wealth which tends to dull a man's sense to those finer qualities of life that God requires of all who hope to enjoy a place in his Kingdom. It is next to impossible for them to change that attitude! Only a miracle of grace can avail to save them from the power of their money!

Mark 10:29-30[a]. I appreciate how much you men have given up to join me in this work. It has meant tremendous sacrifices. But you will be so glad you did so when you see the happy world we are to have here.

Mark 10:31. My, how things will be changed then. The rich and the selfish will no longer be con-

sidered the world's élite. The most honored citizens will be those who have placed character and kindly service first in their lives!

Mark 10:38-40. My dear men, you seem so *determined* to hold high rank in a revolutionary Jewish Kingdom! How little you appreciate the precarious nature of such tawdry honors—and think of the *blood* and *lives* it would cost! Why not join *me* in sacrificing yourselves to bring in a Kingdom which means *peace* and *happiness* for the whole world!

Mark 10:42-44. It isn't political honors and boasting and strutting that mark a man truly great, my friends; it is the unassuming spirit of helpfulness which shows in his daily looks and actions.

Mark 10:45. I have had plenty of chances to win the praises of men, as you well know. But I count it infinitely more worth while to help my people gain freedom and happiness—even if it must require my life to do it.

Mark 11:14. How like a fruitless and dying fig-tree are my people, Israel!

Mark 14:17. After all that the great prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, have said to condemn your effrontery, will you yet dare to desecrate this holy place of worship with your noise and filth and graft?

Mark 11:25. How dare you seek Heaven's forgiveness, when you refuse to open your heart in generosity to those who may have injured you?

Mark 11:29-33. You ask my authority for preaching as I do? Like my friend, John, I simply speak the truth as I see it. I need no other authority than that.

Mark 12: 1-5, 9. You religious leaders have shamefully treated every messenger that God has ever sent you. Don't you realize that such obstinacy will require Him to destroy our nation, and make way for another which *will* do His bidding?

Mark 12:15-17. We should always attend to our civic obligations. But there is a higher duty than even this: give *God* the rights in your lives which are His just due!

Mark 12:24-27. You quibbling Sadducees! Why do you insist upon making light of the return of our dead to enjoy the bliss of the coming Kingdom? Even now, *they live* to Him in the Underworld. How dare you limit His power, and suggest that anything impure can exist in the Kingdom He brings!

Mark 12: 29-31, 34. Religion has but one all-commanding law: live your best life, do all the good you can to everybody.

Mark 12: 35-37. The popular view that one of David's line must win our freedom by the power of the sword, is utterly wrong! *God* Himself will intervene for us and send his glorious Son of Man from heaven to give us a rule of justice which can *never* be overthrown!

Mark 12: 38-40. Never stoop to imitate the mock solemnity of these pretentious scribes. They are proud, selfish and grasping at heart. Cruel hypocrites, that they are! God will give them their just dues!

Mark 12: 43-44. The grateful spirit accompanying a humble gift is of higher value in God's sight than the larger sums casually tossed into the Treasury chest.

Mark 13: 2. This beautiful Temple will one day—not far hence—lie a heap of dusty ruins!

Mark 13: 5-6. Have nothing whatever to do with these glib-tongued Zealot "Christs"! They cause nothing but trouble and bloodshed!

Mark 13: 13, 28-37. As surely as Summer fruit follows Spring leaves and buds, so surely do political events point to the near intervention of God. He alone knows just when the hour will strike; but I assure you that you will witness the Great Event in your very generation! You must be alert every instant!

Mark 14:32[c], 34. I have strange forebodings tonight, men. I am fairly crushed with the turn of events. Keep close watch, while I go aside to pray awhile.

Mark 14: 35-36. *Why* must I face the rejection of my mission and message at the hands of the Holy City! Is there not some *other* way than to see my people destroy their own future? But whatever comes, help me to play the man to the bitter end!

Mark 14:37-38. How little my men sense the danger of the hour! Still less do they realize how keenly I need their fellowship in this crisis! But I do not blame you, men. Your hearts are faithful, but you are tired out completely.

Mark 14:48-49[a]. What, *swords* and *clubs* against a defenseless and innocent man! You cowards! You did not *dare* touch me all the time I was preaching in the open Temple courts!

2. Parallel Passages in Luke-Matthew

Luke 4:4. Matthew 4:4.—Luke 4:8. Matthew 4:10.—Luke 4:12. Matthew 4:7. My life shall always be guided by the will of the Lord. Nothing can ever tempt me to play false to Him!

Luke 6:20-23. Matthew 5:3, 6, 4, 11, 12. We aren't burdened with many of the world's comforts, are we, men? But we are engaged in the hap-

piest work in the world; and the returns—when the King comes—will more than repay you for all your sacrifices. Keep jolly, and play the game!

Luke 6:27-36. Matthew 5:39-40, 42; *7:12;* 5:44-45[a], 46-48. Be patient and generous in your treatment of those who seek to injure you, shaming and winning them by your forbearance. Remember, you are sons of the loving God!

Luke 6:37-38, 41-42. Matthew 7:1-5. Bear with the shortcomings of your fellowmen; for you, too, have your faults. Your faith in them will arouse confidence in you. Be over-generous.

Luke 6:39. Matthew 15:14[b]. Why will men follow unintelligent religious leaders! It always results in disaster, in the end.

Luke 6:40. Matthew 10:24-25[a]. If your hardships seem hard to bear, sometimes, remember that your Teacher endures them, too. *You* ought not to complain, if he does not.

Luke 6:43-45. Matthew 7:18-20; *12:35, 34[b]*. Judge a man's worth by his daily life. If he is truly noble, his actions will be uniformly incorruptible.

Luke 6:46-49. Matthew 7:21, 23-27. Follow the principles of conduct I give you, and you will build types of character that can withstand any temptation that may assail you.

Luke 7:9. Matthew 8:10. How deeply religious

this Roman Captain really is! He puts our own Jewish people to shame by his earnestness!

Luke 7:22-23. Matthew 11:4-6. Tell John not to lose heart, for the happy Era predicted by Isaiah is just about to dawn, as all this popular interest shows. And I *hope* he will not be worried if I do some things in ways different from his.

Luke 7:24-28[a]. Matthew 11:7-11[b]. John is the peer of any prophet that has ever lived, a man of unbending courage, and a sturdy strength of soul that challenges our admiration. Indeed, *God* selected him—from all the men of earth—to announce the coming of His Kingdom to the world!

Luke 7:31-35. Matthew 11:16-19. What a peevish generation this is. It cannot appreciate truth, no matter from what angle it comes. Time will show them quite in the wrong.

Luke 9:57-60[a]. Matthew 8:19-22. A disciple of *mine* must be prepared to live a homeless, friendless, outcast sort of existence. And he must be free from perfunctory religion, and heart and soul for the coming Kingdom.

Luke 10:2. Matthew 9:37-38. There is so much work to be done, and so few able and willing to do it. Urge God to arouse more workers.

Luke 10:11[a], 12. Matthew 10:14[b]; 11:24. Popular

indifference to your message will bring dire punishment, when the King comes.

Luke 10:16. Matthew 10:40. Speak with authority, and do not forget what a divine Cause you represent.

Luke 10:21. Matthew 11:25-26. Simple friendliness is sometimes a better interpreter of things spiritual than profound learning.

Luke 10:23-24. Matthew 13:16-17. You men are enjoying opportunities which the great ones of old would have given their all to experience.

Luke 11:2-4. Matthew 6:9-13[a]. Pray for the *great* needs of life, and think how you can help God hasten His Kingdom.

Luke 11:9-13. Matthew 7:7-11. God's fatherly interest should call out our utmost confidence.

Luke 11:19-20. Matthew 12:27-28. You condemn the helpful work of your own scribes, in casting slurs upon these recoveries of the demented. But you *may* find yourselves opposing *God Himself,* in whose power I work.

Luke 11:23. Matthew 12:30. There is no neutral ground in religion. The indifferent man is also an opponent of the Kingdom.

Luke 11:24-26. Matthew 12:43-45. It is not enough to cleanse the life of evil ways. One must dedicate it to positive goodness. Otherwise old habits

are likely to get a greater hold upon him than ever.

Luke 11:29-32. Matthew 12:39, 40[a, c], 42, 41. People to-day are so inert that it takes a miracle to awaken any interest whatever in religion. A Solomon, or a Jonah, was enough to arouse the men of old; but now, with the very *Kingdom of God* at the doors, these people are utterly unmoved!

Luke 11:33. Matthew 5:15. Truth, like light, is meant for human guidance. No one has a right to hide it from others.

Luke 11:34-35. Matthew 6:22-23. Let nothing, by any chance, dim your moral vision. The eyes of the soul are more important even than those of the body.

Luke 11:39-42. Matthew 23:25, 26, 23. The cleansing of the inner life, and the spirit of kindly service make up the heart of religion. A dead ritual is a very poor substitute.

Luke 11:46. Matthew 23:4. You merciless scribes! You load these unsuspecting people down with a multitude of ceremonial exactions, but not one thing do you do to show them the joyful side of religion.

Luke 11:47-48. Matthew 23:29-31. You scribes *appear* very religious, erecting your fine memorials to the prophets killed by your ancestors! But,

at heart, you share their spirit, and therefore their guilt.

Luke 12:4-5. Matthew 10:28. Are you afraid of death for the cause of God? Yet they cannot touch your *soul*. Fear, rather, to blight the precious soul—which God has given, and *God* can *destroy!*

Luke 12:6-7. Matthew 10:29-31. The God who makes provision for the lowly sparrow, will surely not forget the child of His love.

Luke 12:22-34. Matthew 6:25-33; 6:19-21. Cultivate your precious inner lives, and live for the coming Kingdom. The God of all life—who plans, indeed, to make earth a heaven for your sakes—will see to it that all necessary physical needs are fully supplied. Keep your minds upon that great Ideal.

Luke 12:39-40. Matthew 24:43-44. Be ready, any moment, for the coming of the heavenly King! It is exceedingly dangerous to be caught unprepared!

Luke 12:42-46. Matthew 24:45-51. The faithful soul will be ready for high honors in the Kingdom. But the man who proves untrue to his opportunity will receive drastic punishment.

Luke 12:51-53. Matthew 10:34-36. Some people urge me to preach peace and harmony. But God has laid upon me a message which, much as I

regret it, seems destined to divide *homes* and *hearts*—hopelessly!

Luke 12:54-56. Matthew 16:2-3. How worldly-wise you are, but so slow to see the signs of the coming Kingdom.

Luke 13:20-21. Matthew 13:33. Yes, we are a little group now; but wait, we'll change the whole world before we are through!

Luke 13:24-25, 28-29. Matthew 7:13-14; 8:12, 11. It is only by the most strenuous struggle that one may fit himself for the Kingdom. Many who expect it, will be denied a place at the great banquet-table of honor. And their places will be taken by the Gentiles whom you despise!

Luke 13:34-35. Matthew 23:37-39. How I have yearned to protect my people from their blindness and folly. Their refusal spells their doom. It will be too late when they seek my help at the bar of Judgment!

Luke 14:5. Matthew 12:11. The instinct to help man or beast on the Sabbath day, is both natural and justifiable.

Luke 14:11. Matthew 23:12. The self-seeking man shuts himself into a limited area of progress. He that fits himself into the lives of others, finds the world open to him.

Luke 14:16-24. Matthew 22:1-10, 14. Very few people seem to appreciate the honor of being in-

vited into the Kingdom of God. Their glib excuses show that their minds are preoccupied with trivial human affairs. Aside from the humbler folk, who enjoy few privileges here, most men have fairly to be dragged into the Kingdom!

Luke 14:26-27. Matthew 10:37-38. No man can become my follower who does not dedicate life, home, and *all* to the Cause of God!

Luke 14:35[a, b]. Matthew 5:13[c, d]. A *quitter* is worse than useless in my work.

Luke 15:4-7. Matthew 18:12-14. The smug religion of the formalist does not appeal to God half as much as the heart-hungry cry of those whom you have considered "hopeless." He will do *anything* to reclaim the very least of these unfortunates.

Luke 16:13. Matthew 6:24. If you *will* be the slave of wealth and power, then go to it! God requires the undivided interest of all red-blooded men!

Luke 17:1. Matthew 18:7. Of course, every truth-seeker must expect to face serious obstacles, but God will hold any man accountable for blocking the paths of progress.

Luke 17:3-4. Matthew 18:15, 21-22. Be divinely patient, when injured by others. Your brother's grief is your hour of testing.

Luke 17:26-27. Matthew 24:37-39. Men are still

trifling with Opportunity, as of old. Sad, indeed, is the fate awaiting them!

Luke 17: 34-37. Matthew 24: 40-41, 28. The Judgment will overtake people without warning—wherever indifference prevails!

Luke 18: 14[b]. (See 14: 11.) Matthew 23: 12. The conceited man is unfit for places of responsibility, but God delights to honor the man of intrinsic worth.

Luke 19: 15-26. Matthew 25: 19-29. God expects every man to use his powers to the utmost. Timidity, or misuse of ability, calls for punishment. Added opportunities will be opened before those found faithful.

3. The Gospel of Luke

Luke 2: 49. I am sorry that you have been so worried. When I found that you had all gone, I stayed right here in the Temple, sure that you would come back here to look for me.

Luke 4: 18-19, 21. Isaiah's wonderful experience has been repeated in *my* life. God calls *me* also to spread the happy news of His coming to redeem His people!

Luke 6: 24-26. God pity all of you who find your satisfaction in the cheap enjoyments of the present. How barren and useless your lives will appear when you stand before the bar of almighty judgment!

Luke 7:40-50. Simon, here is a life changed from sin to purity by the knowledge of God's forgiving love. But *your* conventional sins have neither aroused in you the need of forgiveness, nor the burning sense of God's love. How much more fortunate this poor woman is than your proud self!

Luke 9:55. Remember your mission of forbearance and love, men. Answer their harsh rebuff with words of kindness.

Luke 9:60b. Go everywhere, tell everybody of God's love, God's power, and of His immediate coming from heaven!

Luke 9:62. There is no place for half-heartedness in my company. Come with your whole heart, or go back to your easy life.

Luke 10:30-37. Be vitally concerned for *any* man of *any* race who needs your brotherly help. Do *all* you can for him in a spirit of disinterested love.

Luke 10:41-42. Don't let me put you to so much trouble, Martha. Won't a simple meal do just as well? You see, I am so anxious to talk with you both about matters of the greatest import.

Luke 11:5-8. Do you think, for a moment, that God is less interested in our needs than our friends are?

Luke 11:28. My dear woman, there is a greater joy even than having a son who is devoted to re-

ligion. That is, in helping God *yourself* to bring heaven to earth.

Luke 11:36. Let Truth master your life in every detail.

Luke 11:44. You Pharisees are utterly deceptive. Little do people suspect the hollow mockery which you so cleverly conceal.

Luke 11:52. And you scribes: how can God look upon you, except with loathing! For you have deliberately kept people in *dense ignorance,* thus shutting them as well as yourselves from the joys of the Kingdom!

Luke 12:13-21. How short-sighted is he who spends his life selfishly amassing wealth, and looking for personal ease. *God* expects him to develop *character;* he will be judged, not by his possessions but by his moral worth.

Luke 12:35-38. The Lord, like a bridegroom and his party, may come any hour of the day or night. Your watchfulness will be repaid with the greatest of honors at his banquet-table!

Luke 12:47-48. Men pleading ignorance will, no doubt, receive some consideration in the Day of Judgment. But those who deliberately play with opportunity, will receive severest punishment.

Luke 12:49-50. I seem doomed, in my work, to stir up all kinds of trouble. Indeed, I face the hour of supreme testing at Jerusalem. Oh, how I wish

that hour were here! This agony of waiting is almost more than I can bear!

Luke 13:2-5. Don't speculate over the sins of Pilate's unfortunate victims, or of the men who perished in the Siloam disaster. But rather worry over what *God* will do to *you,* because of your unethical lives!

Luke 13:6-9. Our Nation is facing the last of many opportunities to better itself. If it rejects my last message from God, it seals its certain doom!

Luke 13:15-16. What, treat an *animal* better than a *sick woman*—just to keep your heartless Sabbaths!

Luke 13:32[a], 33. Crafty Herod! He thought he would catch me, as he did John. Tell him, for me, that I am still at it. If I perish, it will be in *Jerusalem,* where it counts; and in a manner worthy of a *prophet!*

Luke 14:8-10. Cultivate humility. Remember, true worth is always recognized in due time.

Luke 14:12-14. Set your banquet tables for those who need them; not to excite envy and cause men to offer you empty flattery. God, at least, will honor you for your kindly ministrations to those who can offer no feasts in return.

Luke 14:28-33. I want *my* followers to be ready to sacrifice even their very lives for the Cause. Our work *must* be brought to a successful conclusion!

Luke 15: 8-10, 11-32. Heaven's chief interest, I assure you, is in the recovery of these unfortunate folk who *would* do better if they were given a chance.

Luke 16: 1-9. Earthly wealth should be used with the utmost wisdom, so as to lay foundations of *character* that will endure forever.

Luke 16: 10-12. By your use or abuse of small opportunities in life, you prove your worthiness of larger tasks; or else your utter unfitness for any man's confidence.

Luke 16: 15. Do you *really think* that your wealth and position are proofs of God's especial favor toward you? No, I tell you; *He* knows full well that these things stand in between you and real character! He *hates* that which drags you down and away from His true work!

Luke 16: 19-31. In the coming Kingdom, the most despised beggar on our streets may hold high place before God; while the rich men we honor most may *deservedly* be the objects of God's wrath. Not even a miracle could stir their proud, selfish hearts.

Luke 17: 7-10. Count it your supreme privilege to carry out the will of God. For we are but servants of the Most High. Even the best we can do ought never to satisfy us, but rather to spur us on to added devotion to Him.

Luke 17:17-19. Sometimes the despised foreigner shows more appreciation of religious opportunities than we do.

Luke 17:20-21. The Kingdom will come from heaven *so suddenly* that you will have no leisure to prepare for it. Without a visible sign, presto! *here it is right in your midst!*

Luke 17:22. Many a time, later on, will you men long for one of these days to return! Make the most of them, for they never will come back!

Luke 17:28-30, 32. Men will probably play with life until the *very moment* when their doom is upon them!

Luke 18:2-8[a]. Don't think that God's mercy and sense of justice have failed. In due time He will care for His people with a strong hand.

Luke 18:9-14[a]. God expects men to come into His presence with a true sense of their worth; but He abominates a haughty, self-deceptive spirit which makes true fellowship impossible.

Luke 19:9-10. By this splendid resolution, Zaccheus, you have shown yourself a real son of Abraham; and have resumed your rightful place in society. How much it means to win men like you for the Kingdom!

Luke 19:39-40. Why, the whole world should rejoice over the thought of the coming Kingdom of God!

Luke 19:41-42. Oh, Jerusalem! If only you could realize the peace and joy you are missing! You seem so blind!

Luke 21:34-36. Above all things, friends, keep your minds free from the disgusting temptations of the flesh, and prayerfully alert, so that—when the King comes—you may be among the few who meet His every requirement.

Luke 22:15-16. I have been so anxious to share one more Passover feast with you men. For another year will not find me here. Not until the Kingdom comes shall I be back to celebrate with you again!

Luke 22:35-36, 38. The days of comparative comfort are over, men. Now we are facing a serious crisis—the kind that calls for *red blood* and courage! Oh, I didn't mean *literal fighting!* Enough of *that!*

Luke 23:27-31. Please do not grieve over *me,* my friends; the awful fate that awaits our *Nation* is much more appalling than my death. Pity the suffering families, and think of the horrors of massacre, when the Revolution comes—that I have tried so hard to prevent! My poor misguided people! But they *would not listen!*

4. The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 9: 13. We serve God best, not by empty religious forms, but by lives of kindness to others.

Matthew 12: 5-7. You admit that the Temple ritual must be modified to fit human needs; can't you be considerate of men who, to hasten the glorious Kingdom and all its relief of suffering, keep their bodies fit for the great work before them?

Matthew 12: 11-12. You set aside the ritual for the sake of a needy animal; why not for a human being who is worth a thousand sheep! Don't you *dare* interfere with our good work!

Matthew 12: 17-21. Don't talk about what *I* have done. The prophetic ideal of unheralded service, and consideration for all, is the thing to keep in mind.

Matthew 5: 5. Does the world despise you because of your passionate devotion to God? Wait, *He* will bestow the highest honors upon you for your far-sightedness.

Matthew 5: 7-10. There is nothing that God approves more than a spirit of kindness, clean living, friendliness, and courageous defense of ideals.

Matthew 5: $13^{a}(^{b?})$. The welfare of the *world* depends upon the faithfulness of you men.

Matthew 5: $14^{a}(^{b?})$. You men must show the world

the truth that alone can save it. You dare not keep back the light you have seen.

Matthew 5: 16. You can honor God most by living a worthy example before the world.

Matthew 5: 17. Some people accuse me of "tearing the Bible to pieces." Far from it, I am trying my best to make *all truth* live for men.

Matthew 5: 20. The ponderous formalism of your religious leaders won't get them even to the *doors* of the Kingdom. Look elsewhere for the character which will make *your* entrance sure.

Matthew 5: 21-24. Guard yourselves not only against extreme, overt acts of unbrotherliness, but also against the very first *impulses* that lead in that direction. Remember, even your worship is inacceptable to God unless it is done in a big, open-hearted way.

Matthew 5: 27-28. Do not tolerate even the shadow of an impure thought; much less allow it to master your body!

Matthew 5: 33-37. Let your word be your bond. Don't drag God's sacred name, and your own good reputation, in the dust by the use of excessive vows.

Matthew 5: 38-39[a]. Instead of the usual vengeful spirit, when you are wronged, cultivate a spirit of patient friendliness.

Matthew 5: 41, 43, 45[b]. Try to win men, as God does, by overwhelming generosity, undisturbed

even if they do not at once appreciate your lofty motives.

Matthew 6: 1-4. Don't parade your charitable acts. That's hypocritical, and takes the best out of a gift. Help people sincerely, quietly, out of love. *God* will understand, and appreciate your fine spirit.

Matthew 6: 5-7. Always address God with becoming sincerity, humility and simplicity. You are talking to a great Father who understands your need.

Matthew 6: 15-18. Come before God with absolute purity of motive. Anything less is blasphemy in His sight.

Matthew 6: 34. Use to-day's strength for to-day's needs. Undue worry eats in upon your reserve powers, and injures to-morrow's chances for progress.

Matthew 7: 13^{b}-14^{a}. It is easy to live careless, irresponsible lives. Multitudes throng this highway —to their doom. How few seem to choose the harder path of virtue and real life!

Matthew 7: 15. Look out for pious frauds in religious work! Some men go so far as to pretend to be God's servants in order to serve their own selfish ends.

Matthew 11: 14. John the Baptist is the Announcer of God's Kingdom foretold in the *Book of the Messenger*.

Matthew 11:28-30. You people are bending beneath ritual burdens you have no need to bear. As the writer of olden time has said ("Ben-Sirach"), "I can show you the way to ease your souls, if you will heed my teaching."

Matthew 12:36-37. On the great Judgment Day, even your least words will be called into serious account—perhaps, to your disadvantage!

Matthew 13:24-30. Work as hard as you will to get people ready for the Kingdom, you are bound to meet the most insidious and secret opposition. But on *that* Day the good is bound to triumph!

Matthew 13:44, 45, 46. There is nothing in all the wide world so entrancing—so sure to draw out all your powers—as this work for God.

Matthew 13:47-50. Just as you men used to throw away the bad fish and keep the good, so must *human beings* accept their fate before the final Judge of men!

Matthew 13:51-52. This work calls out everything—old or new—that you may possess. You cannot be too well trained for your tasks.

Matthew 10: 5^b*-6.* Our work must be confined strictly to our own Galilean people. Avoid conflicts with the foreigners, and remember our Jewish people need us most of all.

Matthew 10:36. What a tragedy, that one's own blood relatives should turn against him!

Matthew 15: 12-14[a]. These religious leaders, in their delusion, are working directly against *God*. You can't do anything with them. Leave them to His stern judgment!

Matthew 18: 10. Day and night, I tell you, God's tenderest care is thrown around the lives of these little children.

Matthew 18: 14. God could not bear the thought of letting one of these little ones become lost!

Matthew 18: 23-35. You must forgive your fellowmen, when they sincerely ask it, as freely as God does those who wrong Him so constantly.

Matthew 19: 10-12. In rare cases, where men *must* do so for conviction's sake, they are justified—and wise—in abstaining from marriage relations.

Matthew 21: 28-32. The penitent "outcasts"—as you insist upon calling them—are far more religious, and pleasing to God, than are you so-called "pious" scribes. For they *do* finally carry out the will of God, but *you* only make fair promises, and keep none of them!

Matthew 21: 43. You scribes are having your last chance to obey God this day. Reject Him this once, and you lose your share in the Kingdom of Heaven! Aliens will be called in to take your place!

Matthew 23: 2-3. The teaching of the Scribes is out-

wardly respectable and practical enough, but their *lives* belie their words.

Matthew 23:5. These scribes certainly know how to put on show, obsessed with the desire to receive popular applause.

Matthew 23:15-22, 24, 27-28, 32. You hypocrites! *God* sees your treacherous hearts. He knows your propagandist zeal, your pretended reverence for His Name, your neglect of vital religion! You are *murderers of the Prophets,* exactly as your forefathers were! What a mess you do make of religion. Rotten, rotten to the core!

Matthew 25:1-11[a]. Keep alert for the King of Heaven, or you will be shut forever from the happy times to come!

Matthew 25:31-46. The King of Glory will have just one all-important question by which every soul must be tested: "How much kindness have you shown your needy fellow-men? For your love for them is love for me, and neglect of them means that you care naught for me!"

III. EDITORIAL APPRECIATIONS AND CORRECTIONS OF LATER YEARS:

1. The Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:1[b]. Not "Christ" in the revolutionary sense; but as you Romans use the word: *the offspring of Heaven.*

Mark 1:2[b]. The writer of Malachi also predicted that *John* was to get the world ready for *Jesus*.

Mark 1:11[c]. Not that God meant that Jesus was *changed* from a human being to a divinity in the act of baptism; but that this public dedication was a suitable introduction to the nation.

Mark 1:15[d]. Jesus must have urged upon his people, as we do to-day, faith in his own divinity, and the doctrines of the Church.

Mark 1:24[c]. Of course, in so saying, the demon recognized the fact that Jesus was the divine Son from heaven.

Mark 1:27[c]. The Son of God must have had power to do as he pleased with the minions of hell.

Mark 1:34[b, c]. Demons frequently fled before his presence. But in no case would he let *them* bear witness to his divinity.

Mark 1:39[c]. Of course, he did not intend to give up his work of casting out demons.

Mark 1:40[b], 41[c]. Jesus' touch actually *made* the man well.

Mark 2:6-10. The scribes were shocked to hear *Jesus* claim the power to forgive sins. Jesus could read their minds. And he boldly asserted his divinity to their very faces. His miracle *proved* his authority to forgive men's sins.

Mark 2:20. He meant that he himself was the bridegroom of the Church. And this was his

first prediction of his death, and of our deep sorrow.

Mark 2:22c. You must understand that *new* wine expands, and therefore needs fresh containers that will expand with the juice.

Mark 2:28. Of course, this *was* a rather startling statement for him to make. But he had a perfect right to make any changes in the Sabbath that he wished, being God's Son.

Mark 3:7c-8. Indeed, people from all Palestine, and even from other countries, soon thronged about him to witness his wonderful signs of divinity.

Mark 3:11-12. Instantaneously the demons would grovel before his divine majesty, knowing his mastery over them. He had the greatest difficulty in keeping them from testifying to his heavenly nature.

Mark 4:10-12, 13-20. This is the mysterious meaning which Jesus had hidden in his stories, but only the select few—the initiated—could really get the interpretation.

Mark 4:22. He meant here, that *some* truths were necessarily too subtle for *that* generation to grasp. *We* are privileged to understand it fully.

Mark 4:33-34. Jesus constantly used mystifying parables in talking to his provincial audiences. Needless to say, the true meaning of his words

reached the favored ears of his disciple group alone, that later times might have the *full truth.*

Mark 4:39[b, c, e], 41. He spoke directly to *Nature,* and showed his marvelous control even of its hostile forces. The disciples must have had *some* inkling of his divine nature! How blind they seem to have been!

Mark 5:7[b], 9-10, 12-13[a, b]. This demon also recognized Jesus' divine mastery, and could do only what Jesus' good nature would let him do.

Mark 6:5. The blind unbelief of Nazareth made it impossible for him to display his miraculous glory, and *so* convince them of his messianic nature.

Mark 6:7[b], 13. Beside authority to preach, Jesus must have given the great Apostles especial power to cast out demons, as a sign of the divine authority behind them. All this, and more, they actually accomplished.

Mark 6:14[c]-16. Jesus' miraculous power caused much discussion as to its origin. Herod's superstition assigned it to John's influence.

Mark 6:40[b]-44. And he actually created enough unleavened crackers to feed *5000 men,* with much to spare!

Mark 6:48[d], 49-50[a], 51[b]-52. He performed the unheard of feat of walking calmly over the stormy

waves of the Lake, until he stepped quietly into the boat! The waters quieted down immediately, to the troubled amazement of the Twelve.

Mark 6:56. Everywhere he went, he healed the sick who touched his magic garments.

Mark 7:3-4. The Jewish people had the queerest ritual of holy washings!

Mark 7:17-23. Not food, but evil thoughts corrupt one. That was Jesus' idea.

Mark 8:8^{b}-9. His creative power appeared never to wane.

Mark 8:11. He *might* have given them a sudden sign in the skies, had he so wished.

Mark 8:16-21. How utterly dull for the Twelve ever to worry with such unlimited miraculous power in their midst! But, strangely enough, they forgot after each sign and failed to understand what he was trying to reveal to their dull minds.

Mark 9:2^{b}-10. Even the heavenly effulgence of Jesus, at prayer-time, left the disciples in a puzzled stupor!

Mark 9:41. Christ will surely repay anyone who is kind to his missioners, as they go about the Roman Empire in their work.

Mark 10:33^{b}-34. How clearly the details of Christ's death stand out in our minds. He must have told the Twelve all this beforehand.

Mark 10:40. *God* selects the men who are to sit with me in my glory.

Mark 11:20-21. The miracle of the fig-tree was unanswerable proof of Jesus' power.

Mark 12:6-8, 10-12. Jesus, of course, was the last and the supreme summons of God to the Jews. Even *the Heir* of the Kingdom was rejected by these hard-hearted folk! The sacred Scripture foretold it all, however.

Mark 13:7-8, 10, 14-20, 24-27. A long time must elapse, and many heart-rending signs occur in heaven and on earth, before the Kindom can finally come. God alone knows the actual day.

Mark 14:7-9. How clearly Jesus foresaw his doom. The whole world will hear with true appreciation of the prophetic act of this devout woman. Surely there could be no waste in such a loving act.

Mark 14:18-21, 24^{c}, 27-31. He *must* have foreseen and foretold all of the details of his passion.

Mark $14:49^{b}$. Jesus' capture in the garden was distinctly the will of Heaven, as foretold in the Scriptures.

Mark $14:61^{b}$-62; 15:2. Being the Christ, as we know, Jesus *must* have acknowledged it before both Caiaphas and Pilate.

Mark $15:34^{b}$-37^{a}, 38. *Ps. 22:1* must have been the words that Jesus used in his death-struggle. The

Romans would, of course, think he was talking of Elijah. But his death, as we know—in spite of its seeming ignominy—spelled the final doom of Judaism!

Mark 16:9-20. Jesus appeared, after his death, time and again to his friends. We have every reason to believe these reliable witnesses. Our present mission is being carried on in obedience to his command, and under his protection. We know he has ascended to heaven, for we feel his power in our lives.

2. Parallel Passages in Luke-Matthew

Luke 4:3-13. Matthew 4:3-11. Jesus proved his messianic superiority, even over the arch-enemy, Satan; thus being prepared for his glorious mission.

Luke 7:20[c]. Matthew 11:3[b]. John was *almost* ready to believe in Jesus' messiahship; he needed this last miraculous proof to convince him fully.

Luke 7:28[c]. Matthew 11:11[c]. Of course, Jesus did not mean to imply that John was greater than *himself*. Being merely at the entrance of the Kingdom as Introducer, John could not rank with *any Christian,* even, on the inside!

Luke 16:16. Matthew 11:12-13. In fact, the old régime of Law and Prophets lasted simply through John's ministry. Jesus opened the *New*

Era. Only since *his* days, has *the world rushed* into the Kingdom (the Church).

Luke 7:33-35. Matthew 11:18-19. That peevish generation utterly missed the call of God in the lives of Jesus and John. Time has clearly shown their tragic error.

Luke 10:13-15, 12. Matthew 11:21-23[a], 24. Jesus was right in condemning the cities that refused to accept even the testimony of his numerous miracles as signs of his heavenly origin. See them in ashes now! Or doomed in the day of judgment!

Luke 10:22. Matthew 11:27. Jesus is the only official Revealer of God's truth. He can do anything.

Luke 11:30, 32, 31. Matthew 12:40-42. The ancient world repented of its sins for very much less warning from heaven than that which came through Jesus. They shame the people who hardened their hearts against the supreme heir of heaven!

Luke 12:8-9. Matthew 10:32-33. Men must acknowledge the Saviorhood of Jesus, or be rejected from the Kingdom.

Luke 10:3. Matthew 10:16[a]. The disciples hardly realized all the trials to which they would be subjected for Jesus' sake. How they were torn to pieces by their enemies!

Luke 11:49-51. Matthew 23:34-36. An ancient Apocalypse very truly prophesied how hard-hearted the Jews would be toward the messengers of God. Even to the days of the Jewish Revolution (A.D. 66-70) this has been true. God will hold them responsible for all this blood!

Luke 12:10. Matthew 12:32. Christ will generously forgive those who ignorantly blaspheme his name; but woe betide anyone who speaks lightly of the divine spirit of God Himself!

Luke 12:11-12. Matthew 10:19-20. How well the persecuted disciples of Jesus have been inspired to reply to their enemies!

Luke 12:58-59. Matthew 5:25-26. Give no cause to be haled before pagan judges. They delight to deal harshly with Christians.

Luke 22:30[b]. Matthew 19:28[c]. Jesus' Apostles will be given the highest honors in the Kingdom. They are destined to rule the whole Jewish nation!

Luke 20:18. Matthew 21:44. It is a terrible thing to have the crushing judgment of God's wrath fall upon one, as it surely will if anyone opposes the Kingdom's progress!

Luke 22:28-29. Matthew 19:28. The Twelve were promised great honors in the coming Kingdom: to share Jesus' own glory, and to help rule the world!

3. The Gospel of Luke

Luke 1:5—2:52. The marvelous events attending Jesus' birth clearly prove his divinity.

Luke 3:5-6. The *whole world* is bound to feel the blissful influences of the Gospel.

Luke 3:15. Of course, John was not the Christ; but many people thought he might be—until Jesus appeared.

Luke 3:23[c]. You understand, of course, that Jesus had no real *earthly* father.

Luke 3:23[d]-38. The following pedigree shows clearly, Mr. Theophilus, both Jesus' royal and his divine descent.

Luke 4:29-30. Only by a wonderful miracle did Jesus escape from the hands of his outraged countrymen.

Luke 5:4-10[a]. It was another of his mighty miracles that really won the first disciples, and convinced them of his heavenly nature.

Luke 5:39. Of course, our good old-time Christian religion is good enough for any man, and should never be given up.

Luke 7:11-17. And he wrought the most convincing miracles—such as the raising of people on the way to the grave!

Luke 7:21. He must have given John's two disciples a wonderful demonstration of miracle-

working—enough to convince both themselves and John of Jesus' divinity.

Luke 7:29-30. Just think of it! The Jewish élite would have nothing to do with the great prophet, John. But the common people shamed them by eager acceptance of John's message.

Luke 9:31-33[a], 36[b]. The intimate facts of Jesus' miraculous nature were not divulged by the disciples until after his death.

Luke 10:1, 17-20. Jesus also trained enough of his chosen emissaries to reach every nation under heaven. Their success, especially with *miracles,* elated him greatly. He thereupon gave them added heavenly powers. Still further, he assured them that their names were safely recorded in heaven's Book of Saints.

Luke 12:57. Christians should be ashamed to be taken to court before pagan judges—seeing they themselves are destined to rule the world!

Luke 13:26. On the Day of Judgment, many will seek Jesus' intervention on their behalf—merely on the ground that they were once in his Galilean audiences.

Luke 17:11-19. The Gentiles have shamed the Jews in their generous acceptance of the Christian Gospel.

Luke 18:8[b]. When Jesus returns to rule the world, will his followers be found faithfully watching?

Luke 18:34. You ask why the disciples did not understand his many plain references to his coming crucifixion, and so were not prepared for his death? It was because *God* thought wise to conceal the full facts from them at that time.

Luke 19:11-12[a]. At times Jesus had to warn his disciples that it would be a *long, long* time before the Kingdom could be expected; so many things *had* to happen beforehand.

Luke 19:43-44. Jesus foresaw and explained in detail, all that was to happen in the Roman sacking of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

Luke 21:28. You must look upon these terrible disasters as premonitions that Jesus is coming soon!

Luke 22:31. Peter was saved from permanent defeat by the mighty prayers of Jesus. Otherwise the Church would not have *Peter* as its foundation stone.

Luke 22:37. Jesus knew that the Scriptures had foretold his coming death, and that his fate was set centuries before.

Luke 22:43-44. Don't think, for a moment, that God forsook his beloved Son in his lonely agony. An angel went down from heaven to help him endure his struggles.

Luke 22:51. Of course, Jesus immediately replaced the ear that his disciple so impatiently cut off, and administered a severe rebuke for the deed.

Luke 22:67c-68. It would have done no good whatever for Jesus to give them further proofs of his divinity. Hence his persistent silence.

Luke 23:34a. Jesus was so forgiving in spirit, that we are sure he would not hold it against his enemies because they crucified him. They were only instruments in God's hands to complete the plan of salvation.

Luke 23:39-43. And he even promised entrance into the Lower World of Paradise to the one robber who appealed to him for salvation.

Luke 24:12. Peter, as usual, rushed off to the tomb to investigate the rumor about Jesus' rising from the dead. The folded grave-cloths convinced him that *something* marvelous had happened.

Luke 24:13-35. Once again he appeared openly on the Emmaus road, convincing two disciples that the Scriptures *had* to be fulfilled by this tragic ending of Jesus' life.

Luke 24:36-43. Eleven of them saw him in his physical body, and believed him real.

Luke 24:44-50, 52-53. He gave them a new understanding of the Scriptures, which they thereafter regarded as a book of prophecies concerning Jesus. Thus equipped, Jesus immediately sent them out over the world with miraculous power to win men to their new gospel. As he withdrew

from them into heaven, they began to *worship him as a deity!* Their new faith was evident to all who saw them praying to Jesus in the Temple.

4. The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 1:1-17. The royal descent of Jesus gives him a right to be called the Christ. He came in the fulness of time, as God had planned.

Matthew 1:18—2:23. Many miracles, attending the child's birth, prove his holy origin and divine mission.

Matthew 3:14-15. Jesus really needed no baptism of repentance for himself; for he was utterly *sinless.* He simply set *an example* for his disciples of all ages to follow. John himself frankly recognized this divine nature in Jesus; and of course Jesus himself was aware of his heavenly character before he came to the Jordan.

Matthew 4:14-16. As Jesus was divinely guided to live at Nazareth in his babyhood, so also was he enabled to do his public work at Capernaum so as to carry out God's age-old plans for His Son.

Matthew 4:23c. Jesus always supplemented his teaching with miracles of every conceivable sort.

Matthew 12:15c. Never did a person appeal to him in vain for recovery, no matter how terrible the malady.

Matthew 12:17-21. His seeming modesty was, in reality, a very conscious carrying out of God's long-established plan for his life.

Matthew 5:18-19. Let no man dare deviate one hair's breadth from the final and irrevocable will of Heaven as declared in the Scriptures. One's whole future depends absolutely upon keeping that holy Law to the very last letter!

Matthew 7:6. Do not waste your efforts and your precious messages upon the altogether unappreciative and scornful alien.

Matthew 7:22. At the Judgment Seat, many of Jesus' former listeners will beg him to get them into the Kingdom.

Matthew 11:20, 23^{b}. Why, his miracles alone were enough to persuade these cities of his divinity. Even the *worst* of the olden towns would have responded.

Matthew 13:14-15. God gave Jesus' hard-hearted Jewish listeners over to the spirit of disobedience which they cultivated against him. So they *could* not understand and believe on him, try hard as they would!

Matthew 13:35. Even Jesus' methods of speech were dictated by ages of prophecy.

Matthew 13:36-43. Dramatic, indeed, will be the separation between good and evil, when the judgment seat is set up in the Holy City.

Matthew 13:51-53. Use all the truth, old and new that you have learned, for the good of others.

Matthew 10:8[b, c]. Think of it! I now endue you with power to cure the worst possible diseases, even to the raising of the *dead* to life!

Matthew 10:23. Jesus knew that the Kingdom would come before our imperiled flight from town to town in Palestine brought us into *too* great danger.

Matthew 10:41-42. Christ will not forget to reward any kindness shown to his missionaries in their travels.

Matthew 14:28-31. Jesus worked a double miracle—thus honoring *Peter,* and enabling him alone of the Twelve to feel the divine power.

Matthew 15:23-25. True, Jesus felt that his mission was first and supremely to the Jews. But all Gentiles who appealed to his saviorhood, received a tender hearing.

Matthew 16:16[c]-19. Jesus was so elated over Peter's final discovery of his divinity, that he commended him heartily, and immediately appointed the great disciple as the *Founder of the Holy Catholic Church,* and Keeper of the very gates of Heaven and Hell!

Matthew 17:24-27. Again was *Peter* elevated to a position of distinct honor, when Jesus wrought

a special miracle in order to provide the Roman tax for *just Peter and himself.*

Matthew 18: 15-17. The authority of the *Church* is unquestioned and *final* in all differences of opinion between members.

Matthew 18: 18-20. Heaven recognizes the final authority of prayerful Church decisions.

Matthew 19: 28[b]. In my future kingly glory, I will not fail to let you men share my honors.

Matthew 20: 1, 15. If the latest converts to enter the Kingdom, before Christ's coming, are admitted to the full joys of their Lord, those who, for many years and through interminable hardships, have borne the brunt of the struggle really have no cause or right to complain. We are *all* saved by the wonderful mercy of God!

Matthew 21: 4-5. Jesus did the *unusual* thing in riding into Jerusalem on two little asses, simply to fulfil another of the many prophecies referring to his royal character.

Matthew 21: 14-16. Jesus was accorded the most *wonderful* acclamations in the Temple! And such *healings* as took place! Scripture was again distinctly fulfilled when many *children* took up the refrain of his praises, shouting without the least fear of the irate officials who sought to stop them!

Matthew 21:43. Jesus clearly warned the Jews that the Romans would take their City and their freedom away from them.

Matthew 22:11-13[c]. No one will by any means be allowed in the Kingdom who does not fulfil, in every detail, all the requirements of the Church.

Matthew 23:8-10. You have but *one God,* and *one Lord* and Master, to obey! Give full allegiance to them.

Matthew 26:52[b]-54. Jesus *could* have called to his defense, in the Garden, all the angels of Heaven. But he bowed humbly before the will of his Father.

Matthew 27:6-10. Once more was Scripture unconsciously carried out, when the very Jewish officials themselves used Judas' blood-money to purchase a potter's field for the burial of strangers.

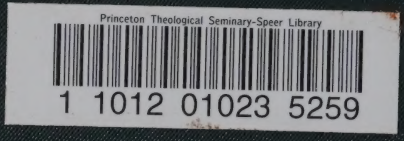
Matthew 27:19. *Pilate's wife herself,* being warned by heaven to do so, pleaded with the obdurate Procurator for Jesus' innocent life.

Matthew 27:24-25. Pilate *tried* to throw the burden of Jesus' death upon the Jews. And *they,* be it said to their everlasting shame, took his precious blood upon themselves and their *whole race!*

Matthew 27:51[b]-53. At the moment of crucifixion, terrible portents occurred in the earth, strongly attesting the fact that the world's Savior had died!

Matthew 27: 62-66; 28: 2-4, 11-15. In spite of all hostile precautions, and lying stories circulated by the enemies of Jesus, the miracles assure any thoughtful person that Jesus *did* actually come to life.

Matthew 28:16-18, 19^{b}-20. The Apostles actually held conversation with Jesus in a rendezvous appointed by himself in Galilee. There it was that the Church received its everlasting commission to baptize the whole wide world into the most holy faith. He will stay by us until this wonderful consummation is actually achieved!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